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S o l u t i o n s f o r W o r k , P l a y , & E d u c a t i o n

Wild!

**Burn Your Own Music
with New iMacs**

Mac OS X Tips

Jumpstart Your New OS

PowerBook G4

Titanium Reviewed

What a Trip!

Save with Online Vacation Planning

Virtual Vacation: Travel Resources

Learn to Make an Audio CD

In Every Issue:

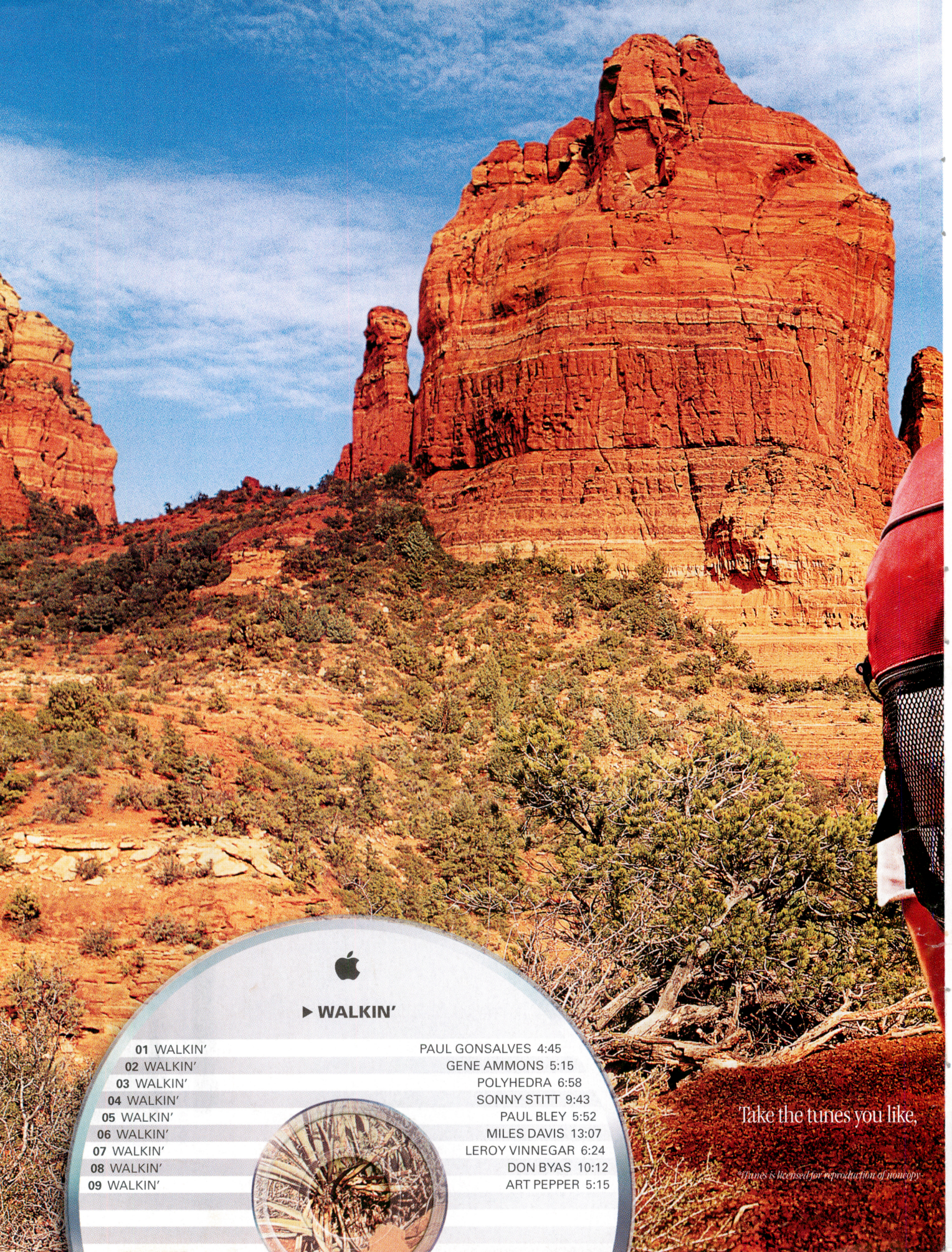
More Tips & Tricks

Answers for Your Questions

Mac Workshops & How-Tos

RIDE-ALONG
ENCLOSED

May 2001



► WALKIN'

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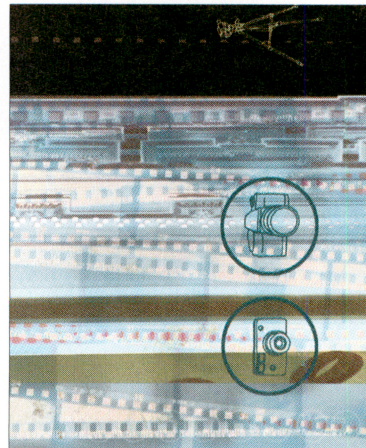
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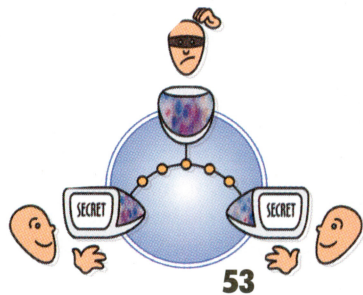
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Rating System

- ★★★★★ **Mac-nificent.** You gotta get it. No flaws.
- ★★★★ **Excellent.** Recommended even if it has a minor flaw or two.
- ★★★ **Average.** Despite problems, still a worthwhile product.
- ★★ **Below Average.** Has serious flaws that limit its usefulness or fun.
- ★ **Poor.** Avoid this product at all costs.

Vacation Dreamin'...

Finally! It's time to start planning your summer vacation, and this issue should get you off to a good start. I travel a lot as part of my job, and of course I use my Mac to plan each business trip.

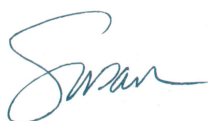
There's something different, though, about sitting down and starting to plan a vacation: researching and booking flights, reserving hotel rooms and rental cars, getting driving directions ... I find myself relaxing already. Hilton Head, here we come! Our top travel Website picks are on page 39.

If international travel is in your plans this year, you'll want to speak the language once you get there. Carolyn is dreaming of Rome and has compared two popular software packages on page 43 that'll get you started with Italian, but both companies offer other options if your thoughts are leaning

- The sun DID come out today after weeks of Northern California rain.
- We got a new iMac (Blue Dalmatian) AND a new G4 Cube in from Apple today for evaluation.
- We got confirmation that Mac OS X has gone gold and will be in stores by the time you read this.
- And we got an invitation to visit Apple later this month for an in-depth overview of Mac OS X. You'll see hands-on coverage of all this next month — I can't wait to install it.

Speaking of Mac OS X, from our annual reader survey we know that about 20% of you will already be using it by the time you read this letter. Half of you are reading the news, comments, complaints, and praise before deciding whether or not to upgrade quickly, and most of the rest of you are waiting for your favorite applications to be updated for Mac OS X. We want to hear from you. Send comments, thoughts, impressions, and — most of all — tips and shortcuts to macosx@machome.com.

All work and no play? Not quite; I'm off to Vegas tomorrow for the weekend, and my Mac and MacSoft's *Play to Win Casino* are turning me into an expert craps player — wish me luck!



Susan Ford, *Publisher*



susan@machome.com

more toward Madrid, Tokyo or, say, Moscow.

We'll also send you and your family off in custom T-shirts — step-by-step directions in the Mac Workshop on page 23. For your listening pleasure, we show you how to burn custom music CDs for your trip, complete with a personalized label, beginning on page 22. We've reviewed Apple's new PowerBook G4, your ultimate travel companion, on page 12, and we've also got some Mac OS X tips, along with nineteen product reviews, and news from Macworld Expo Tokyo.

Enjoy, and let us know what you think: www.machome.com/mayfeedback.

On to more pressing items: You know the saying "When it rains, it pours?" Well, today was more like "When the sun comes out, it really shines."

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Got Gigabytes

Thanks for the solution to a problem I didn't realize I had, but had suspected. After downloading and installing the AppleScript to delete the contents of the temporary items folder, I recovered 1.72 GIGABYTES of drive space. This is only one of the reasons I subscribe to *MacHome*. You come up with tips for problems that an average (or slightly above average) user wouldn't consider in a million years.

Marc Reed

Invisible Download

The download info in the March issue called "Invisible Megabyte Gobbler" cannot be accessed with my ISP. It says no such item found.

Arthur Jenkins

As can happen online, that URL changed since we went to press. Try `ftp://ftp.info.apple.com/Apple_Support_Area/Apple_Software_Updates/US/Macintosh/Misc/AppleScript/Remove_Temp_Items.bin`, which is valid at press time.

Downgrading Browsers

Thanks for the March 2001 review of Netscape 6.0. Ross Tibbits exercised great reserve in his comments. The difference between what was and is still being promised and what Netscape 6 actually delivers is significant.

"Tends to crash?" Try hangs up, freezes and disconnects. One wonders if this is actually a very early Beta release!

Tibbits writes, "... or simply stick with 4.7." Over the weekend, I put all files and parts of Netscape 6 in the Trashcan of my iMac (again) and returned to 4.7.3 and Outlook Express 5.02.

Robert E. Myers

Polished Apples

I have a graphical suggestion, and I'm sure I'm not alone in my desire. In your review summary, why not make the red box containing the designated number of apples a consistent size (as if it held the maximum five apples), so that the white space created by anything less offers some context and perspective as to the rating?

By having the box collapse on the apples regardless of number, nearly any rating appears to be the maximum until further analysis (active comparison to other reviews). If nothing in that issue receives five apples, how are we to know four is not the maximum (as it typically is with movie ratings, for instance)? Keeping the box a consistent size would make for a much faster and easier visual method for perceiving how the product rates in the context of others — the more white space remaining, the less impressed you were with the product.

Dan Remmes

Thanks for the idea. We've started using it in this issue. As always, keep sending ideas and requests to `letters@machome.com`.

Power to Burn

Yes, the PowerBook G4 looks great — it comes with iMovie, but what good is it if, after editing, the movie sits in the PowerBook? Where's the CD burner to at least make a QuickTime movie of my efforts which anyone (PC users, too) can view on their computer? Also, what good is iTunes without a burner?

I'll wait for a CD burner before I buy one! Great magazine!

Jack Bass

You can easily connect an external



burner to the PowerBook G4, but that solution would sacrifice portability. Without a burner, iTunes is still the top all-purpose audio CD and MP3 player. For more thoughts on the suave Titanium PowerBook G4, see our in-depth review on page 12.

Windows Switch

Thank you for mentioning Program Switcher in your "Ultimate Utility User Guide." Alt-Tab was just about the only thing I missed about Windows — no more. Now, if only I could do Option-double-click on a PC.

Joe Shaulis

CD Menu

Let me first say your magazine is great, and the CD is even better. It would be great if you would go back to including the contents of the CD in the magazine like you did about a year ago. I loved to just clip the contents page and fold it into the CD envelope for easy reference later. Thanks for the great stuff.

Alexander Peña

As requested, we're listing CD highlights in the magazine. Let us know if it's helpful, or if you have any other suggestions.

AppleWorks Versions

Which version of AppleWorks are you referring to in the March issue of *MacHome*? I have AppleWorks 6 and can't find the New Document dialog box to choose Use Assistant or Sta-

tionery, as you refer to in the first paragraph of the article.

Ed Heuer

Just finished reading the March edition of *MacHome* and was wondering what version of AppleWorks Helen Bradley used for "Build Your Own Stationery." I have AppleWorks 6 and was not able to find the Letter and Letterhead Index as indicated in her article. Tried reinstalling, but still not there. Was she perhaps using an older version?

It would be helpful if the author included version information when writing how-tos like this. Otherwise, I enjoyed this edition (as always).

Ed Busch

That article was based on AppleWorks 5. If you have AppleWorks 6, creating stationery is even simpler. When launching the program, click the Templates tab at the bottom of the Starting Points window. Choose a letterhead that is similar to your objective. Modify it, adding your own personal information and formatting, and choose Save As. When saving, click the Template radio button, and the next time you launch AppleWorks, you can select your personal stationery from the Templates window.

Off Switch

Should my iBook ever be turned off? I've had people tell me to shut it down whenever it's not in use — others say leave it on all the time. Is there a right answer to this?

Susan Union

Turning off your computer has become a personal preference, rather than a necessity. Leaving your iBook on, but asleep, won't damage it. Instead, you'll be able to get to work quicker than if you had to start it up each time.

Digitize Audio

I have a question that I have not been able to get a definitive answer to. I have an early Mac G3. Can I add a CD-R unit to it and be able to transfer my not inconsiderable collection of cassette music tapes to CDs that I can play on a CD player?

James C. Johnson

Yes. If your computer lacks USB or FireWire ports, locate a SCSI burner. For more help, look at our November 2000 Mac Workshop about digitizing old music.

write to us...

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letters@machome.com

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Apple Unleashes Patterned iMacs, Price Drops, Speed Boosts, Screaming Graphics Card at Tokyo Expo

The big news from Macworld Expo Tokyo (where Apple CEO Steve Jobs appeared nattily, though uncharacteristically, attired in suit and tie) was the introduction of some literally eye-popping new iMacs wearing patterns called **Blue Dalmatian** and **Flower Power**. Apple has relegated the Ruby, Sage, and Snow iMacs to the color graveyard with the fruit-flavored contingent of old. Will

Flower Power clash with your decor? No problem. You can still order Indigo or Graphite.

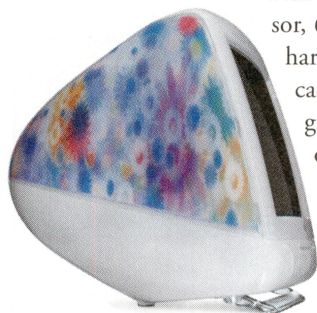
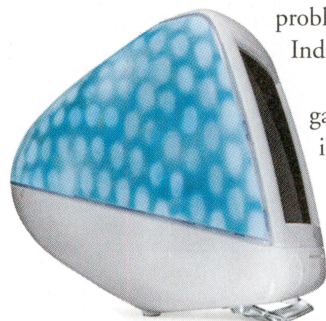
Apart from the avant-garde 1960s effect, the new iMacs feature G3 processors, video out, iTunes, iMovie 2, Mac OS 9.1, and FireWire in three configurations. The Indigo model for \$899 comes with a 400MHz G3 processor, 64MB of RAM, a 10GB hard drive, 512K backside cache, ATI RAGE 128 Pro graphics card with 8MB of video RAM, and a slot-loading CD-ROM drive.

The next model, for \$1,199, is available in Indigo, Blue Dalmatian, and Flower Power. It features

a 500MHz G3 processor, 64MB of RAM, a 20GB hard drive, 256K on-chip backside cache, ATI RAGE 128 Ultra with 16MB of video RAM, and a slot-loading CD-RW drive.

The iMac Special Edition, for \$1,499, available in Graphite, Blue Dalmatian, and Flower Power, features a 600MHz G3 processor, 128MB of RAM, a 40GB hard drive, 256K on-chip backside cache, ATI RAGE 128 Ultra with 16MB of video RAM, and a slot-loading CD-RW drive.

A new incarnation of the **Power Mac G4 Cube**, for



Go for the Burn

You want to burn CDs, sure. But you'd also like to listen to them. Sony's got a battery operated portable CD-RW drive that does both. The Digital Relay CRX10U-

A2 drive for \$399 connects to your Mac via USB, and performs all common tasks such as backing up your files, recording digital images, and creating music CDs. When detached from the computer, the drive functions as a CD player that can play CDs with MP3 files. Playback is controlled via a wired remote control that also comes with a battery life indicator and LCD display. The unit will be available in April.

Sony, 888-476-6972, www.sony.com



Mitsubishi Monitors

Are you a graphics or CAD/CAM pro, desktop publisher, or programmer looking for a flat CRT? Check out the 19-inch Mitsubishi Diamond Pro 920 and the 22-inch Diamond Pro 2060U models.

The Diamond Pro 920 for \$479 features a .24mm aperture grille pitch designed to improve screen clarity and sharpness, maximum resolution of 1,600 x 1,200, and an 85Hz refresh rate. The Dia-

mond Pro 2060U for \$999 gives you a .24mm aperture grille pitch, a maximum resolution of 2,048 x 1,536, and a refresh rate of 75Hz. It comes with a self-powered USB hub. Both monitors are plug and play with an updated design that saves on desk space.

NEC-Mitsubishi Electronics Display, 888-632-6487, www.necmitsubishi.com



Let's Hear from You!

Write us a quick note and tell us what you think of this month's issue! Visit us at:

www.machome.com/mayfeedback

\$1,599, features a 450MHz processor and 20GB hard drive. It comes packed with 128MB of RAM, a slot-loading CD-RW drive — located on top for easy access — and iTunes and iMovie 2. Apple dropped the price of the 64MB Cube to \$1,299, while a high-end Cube with 256MB of RAM, a CD-RW drive, and a GeForce2 MX graphics card is \$2,199. Apple also dropped the price of its 22-inch flat-panel Cinema Display to \$2,999.

The Force

Attention 3D graphics pros and gamers: **NVIDIA's GeForce3** graphics processor is first on the Mac! The chip is available as a \$350 build-to-order option for the Power Mac G4 tower, or \$600 as a standalone card. And just for the record, this chip features 57 million transistors and processes at 76 gigaflops (Floating Point Operations Per Second). That means it's very, very fast.



Good Tunes

For the legions of **iTunes** fans, version 1.1 of the software now supports more than 30 external

CD-RWs, such as QPS, Sony, LaCie, Iomega, VST, and others. A list of compatible brands and models is available on Apple's Website at www.apple.com/itunes.

Apple announced a new version of **iMovie**, its consumer digital video editing software. Version 2.0.3, which you can download free from Apple's Website, lets you export to iDVD, the company's consumer DVD mastering software.

Apple, 800-538-9696, www.apple.com

Your Aching Wrist — Not

Are you familiar with the pain and suffering of Carpal Tunnel Syndrome, or perhaps a less serious variation of wrist soreness, from using your mouse or trackball? For \$10, you can relieve your pain with **Wrist-Mate**, a wrist support from NTA. This device attaches to any mouse or trackball with a piece of velcro and actually moves along with the mouse, holding your wrist in a straight, neutral position. This is supposed to reduce stress on arm tendons and the median nerve to prevent ailments of the wrist, forearm, back, and neck. The device's flexible neck even lets you execute fine mouse movements.

NTA, 888-565-9101, www.wrist-mate.com

The Eyes Have It

If you're among the legions looking for a digital camera, behold some hot new models coming your way from Canon.

The **PowerShot A10** for \$399, is a 1.3 megapixel USB unit

with a 3X/6X optical/digital zoom. Use it with AA-sized batteries and CompactFlash card. Or check out the PowerShot A20, a 2.1 megapixel model for \$499, which features higher resolution and a 3X/7.5X optical/digital zoom. The Pow-

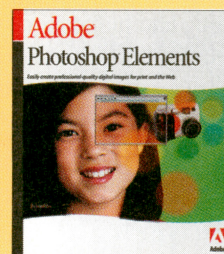


erShot S300 Digital ELPH, an ultra-compact 2.1 megapixel unit, for \$599, also features 3X/7.5X optical/digital zoom. It uses a lithium ion battery and features audio-video out. These new cameras work with Canon's Card Photo Printer CP-10, a compact direct digital color printer for \$299, which is designed to give you credit card sized photos in about a minute.

Canon, 800-652-2666, www.usa.canon.com

Imaging for the Rest of Us

If you're an amateur photographer, hobbyist, or business owner who has hesitated to jump right into a high-end image editing application like Photoshop, get ready for a treat. Adobe has launched **Photoshop Elements**, a new application targeted to non-professionals who want to perform complex image editing tasks. Scheduled for release in the second quarter, it's designed for both print and online graphics. Photoshop Elements gives you many of the creative capabilities of Photoshop, but with a more intuitive interface and a more affordable price of \$99.



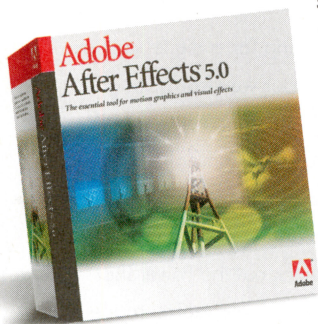
Photoshop Elements includes the following items: Hints and Recipe Palettes, which show you how to use the program; a file browser to visually locate photos in your computer; a filter browser that lets you preview and apply creative filters via drag and drop; Photomerge, which merges and blends multiple images into seamless panoramas; and more.

Adobe, 800-833-6687, www.adobe.com

Just For Effect

If your line of work or play involves creating motion graphics or visual special effects for film, video, multimedia, or the Web, watch out for **Adobe After Effects 5**, an upgrade of the motion graphics and visual effects software for \$649. The new version is designed to give you a variety of more precise creative controls. The software lets you mix 2D and 3D layers in a single composition, create and animate lights and cameras, define shadow characteristics, and more. You can also animate layers hierarchically by defining parent-child relationships between layers. The program lets you create procedural animations without keyframes, while new effects include shatter, radio waves, and Vegas.

Adobe, 800-833-6687, www.adobe.com



Scanner City

Scanner technology is constantly evolving, and Hewlett-Packard has introduced what it calls a new scanning technology with three flatbed **HP Scanjet models**: the **7400C** (\$499); the **7450C** (\$699); and the **7490C** (\$999), targeted to the office market. They will be available in April.

These models, which scan in 48-bit color (trillions of colors) on a legal-sized bed, can automatically choose the appropriate resolution depending on the scan. HP says its new scanning technology gives the scanners 2,400 dpi optical resolution. All three models feature front-panel buttons for one-touch scan, email, fax, and OCR functions and a front panel LCD display. They also include a top lit transparency adapter for 35mm slides, negatives, and transparencies up to 5 x 5 inches, and give you both SCSI and USB connections.

The higher-end models come with a 50-page automatic document feeder that scans 15 pages per minute. The 7490C includes image editing and photo stitching software.

But wait! There's more! Epson has released four versions of the **Expression 1680** flatbed scanner: the Special Edition (\$799); the Artist (\$899); the Pro (\$1,149); and the Pro FireWire (\$1,399). All scan at 48-bit color and 16-bit grayscale, and feature a 1,600 x 3,200 dpi maximum hardware resolution. While the Special Edition comes with the Epson TWAIN Pro 2.0 scanner driver, the other models also include graphical and OCR software. Optional features include an 8 x 10-inch transparency unit, a 30-page automatic document feeder, and FireWire (built into the top model).

Hewlett-Packard, 800-752-0900, www.hp.com

Epson, 800-463-7766, www.epson.com



Do You Back Up?

Almost anyone can tell you what it's like to lose precious files as a result of a power surge or failure. That's where American Power Conversion's new **Back-UPS CS 350VA** and **500VA** (\$85 and \$130 respectively), come in. This line of desktop uninterruptible battery backup power supplies is designed for small businesses and corporations.

Built-in software saves your files before it shuts down your Mac (you need Mac OS 9.0.4 or higher). It also features six high-powered outlets, optimized alarm indicators, and fax/modem and DSL surge protection.

American Power Conversion,
800-800-4272, www.apcc.com



Go Fetch!

If you've been uploading files to the Internet and your Website for any length of time, we probably don't have to tell you about Fetch, one of the oldest and most popular Mac File Transfer Protocol (FTP) programs. Now Fetch Softworks has released Fetch 4 for \$25, an upgrade that supports Mac OS X, Keychain, contextual menus, proxy servers, Kerberos authentication and encryption, and remote image editing. You can now move files between directories by dragging them!

Fetch Softworks,
www.fetchsoftworks.com

Printer Power

Whether you're the color inkjet or monochrome laser type, there are just sooooo many new printers to choose from.

Say you're in the market for a USB color inkjet. Epson has released the **Stylus Photo 780** (\$199), the **Stylus Photo 890** (\$299), and the **Stylus Photo 1280** (\$499). All three feature six colors, a maximum resolution of 2,880 x 720 dpi black and color on various photo papers and 1,440 x 720 black and color resolution on plain or specialty papers. All can print a 4 x 6-inch photo on photo paper in "fine" mode in 48 seconds, and an 8 x 10-inch photo in under two minutes, the company says. Use these printers to produce borderless photo prints in 4 x 6, 5 x 7, and 8 x 10, and other sizes depending on the model. The 890 and the 1280 models feature edge-to-edge snapshot printing for continuous 4 x 6-inch photos (like the ones you get from the photo lab) and they include the roll paper starter kit with holder and sample roll so you can try it out immediately. Print 8 x 44-inch panoramas (the 890) or 13 x 44-inch panoramas (the 1280) as well. The 1280 also gives you larger border-free photos at 11 x 17-inch and 13 x 19-inch sizes. All three printers come with software bundles.



Ok, but what if you're in the monochrome laser frame of mind? Hewlett-Packard has come out with a series of monochrome laser printers. The **LaserJet 1200** for \$399 (\$599 for the network model), prints 14 pages per minute at a resolution of 1,200 dpi. The **HP LaserJet 1220** for \$529 is an Internet enabled all-in-one, that gives you print, copy, and scan functions. This USB printer spits out pages at a rate of 14 per minute at 1,200 dpi. The built-in scanner has a



resolution of 600 dpi and can scan to your Website or email program.

The next level up features the **LaserJet 2200** for \$799 which prints at 19 pages per minute. You can even print directly from your PDA or cell phone via its infrared port.

Here's another variation on the all-in-one: the **HP PSC 750** for \$299, a USB printer, scanner, copier that gives you photo-quality color as well as black text. This model, which ships in April, features 2,400 x 1,200 dpi color images on photo paper at up to 11 pages per minute in black, and 8.5 pages per minute in color. The scanner features 600 x 1,200 dpi optical resolution and 36-bit color or millions of colors.

Hewlett-Packard, 800-752-0900, www.hp.com
Epson, 800-463-7766, www.epson.com

Meet Your Connection

The Consumer Networks Business Unit of Proxim (otherwise known fondly as Farallon) has unveiled the NetLine Wireless Broadband Gateway, which lets schools and businesses create networks that support Macs and other operating systems over wired and wireless connections. The device, for \$399, also lets folks on a network share a single cable modem or DSL Internet connection without extra IP addresses.



Farallon, 510-346-8001, www.farallon.com

Writers Take Note

It's hard to write creative copy for commercials, corporate videos, presentations, and speeches, but Final Draft AV for \$149 can help. This multi-column script writing package, features automatic formatting so that paragraphs stay aligned as you type. You don't have to retype, rearrange, or repaginate manually. You can even import scripts from your word processor.

Final Draft, 800-231-4055
www.finaldraft.com

Willow Cases

Transporting our Macs from place to place can be problematic. Not so with some new cases from Willow Design. Willow is shipping a PowerBook G4 carrying case for \$123.



It measures 15.5 x 13.5 x 6.0 inches, weighs 3.1 pounds, and comes in a variety of colors. Willow also has released its Cube case for \$110, a carry case for Apple's 15-inch Flat Panel Display for \$116, and the Inter-urban Laptop Roller Case for \$250, which holds a PowerBook, portable printer, and accessories.

Willow Design, 800-668-1109, www.willow-design.com

The Elemental PowerBook: Titanium

by Zack Stern



It's Even Thinner Than Possible

Apple has another cliché-inducing machine on its hands. Slender, sleek, smooth, and sexy are in danger of being repeated at every mention of the Titanium PowerBook G4. These adjectives might lose some impact, but this saucy PowerBook is worth it. With a 3:2 widescreen display, a full complement of ports, and spy-plane-approved titanium enclosure, the PowerBook G4 is the new portable to covet.

The biggest difference between the PowerBook G4 and other portables is its widescreen display. A diagonal, 15.2-inch screen with a 3:2 aspect ratio gives more room to watch movies, work with Photoshop palettes, and view multiple documents. This PowerBook provides almost twice the screen space of an iBook.

The built-in DVD-ROM drive powers movies on the widescreen display. While DVD movie formats differ, you'll get a bigger picture with the wider aspect ratio than you would with a classic, 4:3 PowerBook.

Aside from the large, bright screen, the shape of the PowerBook G4 sets it apart. Only an inch thick, it slips into

any narrow bag. Even with the screen open, the PowerBook G4 is about an inch shorter than the PowerBook G3, which should give frequent fliers more room while traveling. The width is about an inch larger than other laptops, but this extra space is used by the thin display.

Apple crammed the standard ports into this small computer, with most of them behind a stylish titanium door. Connect with audio-out, one FireWire, two USB, Ethernet, S-Video out, and VGA-out ports. If that's not enough, add a PC card for more options.

At 500MHz, with 256MB RAM, and a 20GB drive, this PowerBook came to work. The generous amount of RAM drives many applications concurrently, the drive space provides enough room to do some editing with the included iMovie 2, and the zippy G4 processor moves applications along at a rapid pace. These items add up to a great PowerBook that could even replace a desktop Mac.

The PowerBook G4 works as quick as it looks. Programs launch without hesitation, and they move as fast as on other Macs. The graphics performance is also worth noting; with

ATI's Rage 128 Mobility chip, modern games like Unreal Tournament and design applications are a portable reality.

With stereo speakers positioned next to the keyboard, this PowerBook delivers reasonable audio. There aren't any exciting surprises here; there is still no room for bass on a portable. But mid-range sounds are clear and can be turned up to an authoritative volume.

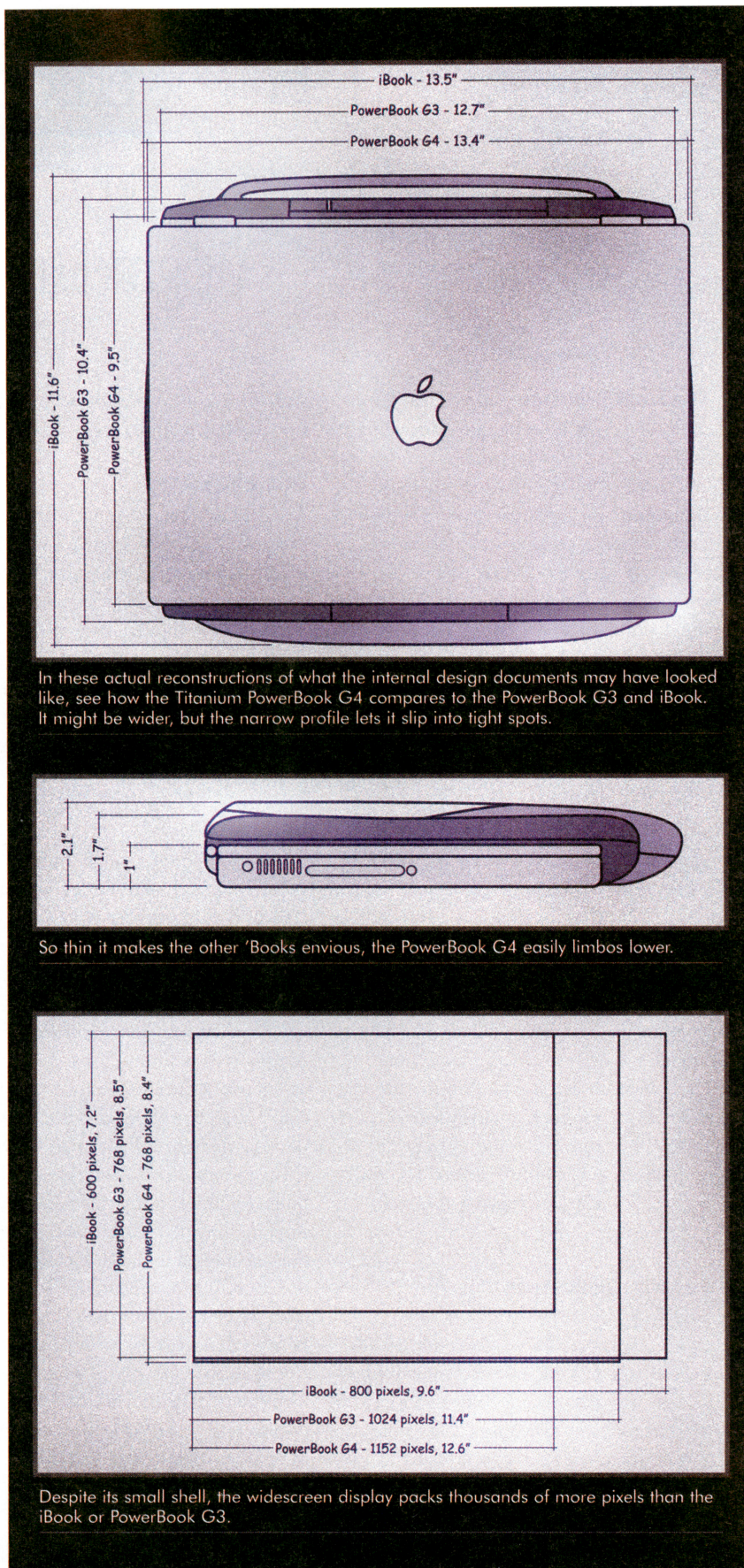
It wouldn't be an Apple PowerBook if there weren't additions that make users smile. The keyboard, which easily lifts out in order to add RAM, is held down by several tabs and sticks in place with seven magnets. The hidden display latch is drawn down by another magnet as the PowerBook is closed. The sleep LED pulsates a cool blue, complementing the silver enclosure. And the mouse button is comfortably more spring than click.

Installing parts in the PowerBook G4 yielded mixed results. Accessing and inserting RAM below the keyboard is straightforward. But adding an AirPort card can be a burden. Because this installation is the first that requires you to remove eight screws and the back panel, nervous new owners should seek help. Taking the cover off and depositing the card worked as expected. Replacing the cover, however, was a chore even for this Apple-Certified-technician/editor. The case didn't seem to line up properly with its tabs, and some screws were inserted at an angle, which was unexpected. Finally, while the titanium case is rigid enough to protect the computer, a screwdriver easily gouged it.

The PowerBook G4 has a few minor issues that are worth noting, but they only minimally detract from the computer. Everything is so packed together, there's not much room for heat to dissipate. If you type on your lap, your legs may get hot. The PowerBook G4 runs at about the same temperature as the PowerBook G3, however, so if you're used to that laptop, you won't notice a significant difference.

The DVD-ROM drive occasionally misbehaved. Sometimes when waking from sleep, the PowerBook didn't notice that a disc had been in the drive, and so it couldn't eject the CD, seemingly because it considered the drive empty.

AirPort performance is weaker on this PowerBook than on other portables. In comparison, an iBook's reception is near the maximum possible, but this PowerBook achieves about half of that potential in the AirPort application. But real-world performance within the *MacHome* offices yielded no problems with the reception. Aside from the physical installation, AirPort works well.





Even PowerBook G3 owners have something to gain by upgrading to the Titanium.

The Final Decision Overall, the Titanium PowerBook G4 is a great machine. While AirPort installation, heat, and DVD-ROM quirks mar the otherwise shiny finish of the PowerBook G4, there's a lot of substance to offset these complaints. If you need to take a powerful computer on the road, or replace an ailing desktop, this PowerBook has the right features. The widescreen display, battery life, and small form mean that even PowerBook G3 owners have something to gain by upgrading to the Titanium.

PowerBook Tips

The PowerBook G4, like other Apple portables, has extras to discover. Follow along as we uncover its secrets.

What's Missing?

There's only one FireWire port, instead of two, to save space. And audio-in is a thing of the past. The PowerBook G4 includes a built-in microphone, but you'll need an adapter to connect an external microphone or other sound source. The simplest solution to create an audio-input is to use Griffin Technology's \$35 USB iMic (www.griffintech-nology.com).

FireWire Disk Mode

The PowerBook G4 can work as an external FireWire drive, so you can connect it to a desktop and manipulate files as if it were a hard disk. Once you have a 6-pin to 6-pin FireWire cable in hand, power down the PowerBook. Start it up while pressing the T key, and wait for the FireWire icon to appear. Now plug it into another FireWire Mac. If the other Mac can't see the PowerBook,

search for a FireWire software update at <http://asu.info.apple.com>.

DVD On the Fly

The PowerBook G4 plays DVDs, and it can also show movies on a TV. With the laptop off, connect a TV to its S-Video port. Use the included adapter if your TV has RCA inputs. Turn the TV on, then start the Mac. After launch, select Video Mirroring in the control strip. Also select Overscan to use all of the screen room on the TV. Launch Apple DVD Player, and roll the movies.

IR Network

Many PowerBooks, including the PowerBook G4, ship with an infrared (IR) port that may get you out of a jam. First, it can sync to a Palm OS handheld without wires. But the real payoff could be an emergency file transfer.

If faced with two PowerBooks with no AirPort cards and no cables, the IR ports can network the computers. Open the AppleTalk control panel. Scroll down the pop-up menu to Infrared Port (IrDA). Close the window, saving changes. With both computers using this protocol, line them up on a flat surface so the IR ports face each other about 10 inches apart. In the control strip, click on the plain folder icon, and choose Turn File Sharing On. From the other computer, identify this laptop in the Chooser after selecting AppleShare. Log in, and share files. Speeds will be limited; for files bigger than 100MB, use Ethernet cables.

Battery Advice

The Titanium PowerBook G4 includes a single battery. We had a battery life

longer than three hours with general Internet use, word processing, and file sharing, but pack an extra battery for the road. You can also try these tips to squeeze more juice from a battery.

Silver Screen: The biggest draw on the battery comes from the LCD. Turn down screen brightness when you're not plugged-in. Use the Energy Saver control panel to automatically turn off the screen if the PowerBook is idle.

Motors: The drive motors in your PowerBook also drain power. Copy the significant files from a CD instead of playing it in the drive. If you're not using a CD, eject it to stop the PowerBook from checking the drive.

You Are Getting Sleepy: In the Energy Saver control panel, set your PowerBook to sleep after idling a few minutes.

AppleTalk Gets Chatty: If you don't need to access a network, turn off AppleShare in the Sharing control panel and disable AppleTalk in the Chooser. These tools regularly query servers, like the DVD-ROM drive checks for discs. **MHJ**

rating

Titanium PowerBook G4 500MHz
\$3,500, Apple, Inc.
www.apple.com
800-692-7753

 Stunning design, widescreen display delivers extra pixels, fast.

 DVD-ROM drive couldn't eject discs at times, complicated AirPort installation, gets hot.



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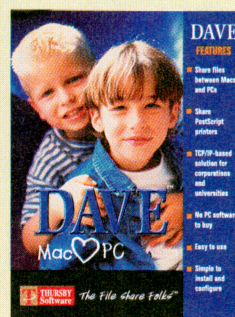
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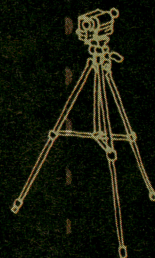
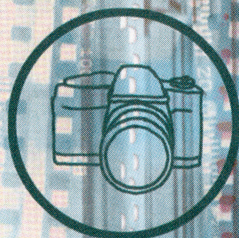
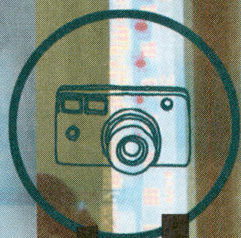
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files on any Mac workstation
or AppleShare server.



by Sandy Brundage

Let's Get Digital

How to Fit Your Old Analog Footage Into iMovie

iMovie is great – if you have a digital video camcorder. But does that mean your trusty old analog footage is doomed to disintegration? Nah. You don't even need FireWire. With a little bit of hardware to digitize the footage, you can slide the results into iMovie without missing a clip.

What you'll need is a video capture box like Dazzle's Hollywood DV Bridge (\$300; www.dazzle.com) or Sony's DVMC-DA2 (\$399; www.apple.com/imovie). A video capture box turns analog footage like 8mm, VHS, SVHS, or Hi8 into digital bits your computer can understand – a process called digitizing.

Once you've picked out a capture box, follow its installation instructions, plug your analog camcorder into its analog input, and open iMovie.

If Only It Were That Simple

But digitizing analog video isn't quite as easy as plugging in the capture box, leaning back in your chair and saying, "Engage." The first step actually begins with your analog camcorder in hand. Follow the "garbage in, garbage out" rule. If you don't start with clean, well-lit analog footage, the digitized result will look like mud.

When your analog footage looks good, it's time to con-

sider what's involved in making it look good digitally. Video devours hard drive space. To save room, the video data is compressed by the capture box. But with digital video, compression typically leads to lower quality video. When you open the file for editing, save changes without compression until you're making the final save. Keep in mind, though, that four minutes of footage can easily suck up 1GB or more of space.

Noise and overscan are two other phenomena lurking in the depths of video. Noise is those dots swimming around the dim areas of an image, and unfortunately, you have to live with them unless you can reshoot with better lighting.

Overscan, on the other hand, can actually be a friend. A TV's video signal isn't as clean as a computer monitor; it has specks around the borders of an image. So televisions discard the borders while playing a video. This is called overscanning. If you plan to transfer the movie back to videotape, the TV will once again mask those border blotches. But if you're sending the video to the Web, a utility like Terran's Media Cleaner EZ (\$99; www.terran.com) makes cropping borders and compressing video easy.

When the Frame Drops

Digitizing demands a lot of computer processor power. As frame after frame flies into the digitizing hardware, the computer might miss a few or slow down. The key to minimizing dropped frames is memory.

Although you can get by with 128MB, we recommend 192MB (adding 64MB costs around \$40). Memory is cheap; memories are priceless.

That's not the only step you can take. Defragment your hard drive with a utility like Norton Utilities (\$100; www.symantec.com) before starting to digitize. This will speed

up hard drive access. You should also turn off virtual memory, and close any other active applications. Cut all network activity, including file sharing. Finally, rebuild your desktop to clean out icons and other junk leftover from deleted files. Hold down the Command and Option keys while restarting the Mac. A dialog box will ask if you want to rebuild the desktop; click Ok.

If the computer still drops frames (iMovie will tell you when it's chronically dropping), assign more memory to iMovie by closing the application, then highlighting its icon from the Finder and clicking Get Info from the File menu. Select Memory, then increase the Minimum Size requirement. You might also consider investing in a faster hard drive. A drive spinning between 7,200 and 10,000 rpm can better handle your digital and analog video demands.

Finally, there's sound to deal with. Remember those bad kung fu movies where the actors' voices never kept up with their mouths? Unless you want this to happen in your movie, import the audio at the same bitrate (the amount of audio data delivered per second) used during taping. This will either be 12 bit or 16 bit, depending on your camcorder settings.

So now that you know what steps to take to digitize your favorite analog clip, it's time to put your iMovie skills to use. For editing tips, check out the "iMovie Survival Guide" in the April 2001 issue of *MacHome*. **MHJ**

No FireWire? No Problem.

If your Mac doesn't have FireWire, there's still hope with a USB video capture box — but since USB struggles with a smaller bandwidth, the digitized video will be lower quality.

You'll also need to convert the digitized footage with QuickTime Pro (\$30; www.apple.com/quicktime) into the DV Stream format iMovie understands. (You don't need to do this with a FireWire capture box because it automatically digitizes the video as DV Stream, just like a digital camcorder would.)

Here's how to convert:

1. Open QuickTime Player.
2. Choose Open Movie from the File menu and open the video file you want to convert.
3. Choose Export from the File menu.
4. Now select Movie to DV Stream. Use Default for other settings.
5. Name and Save your DV movie.
6. Move the new DV movie to the iMovie Media folder of your project.
7. Open iMovie. A popup dialog box tells you that the stray clip (i.e. the new movie you just saved) in the project folder is being moved to the Shelf; click OK.

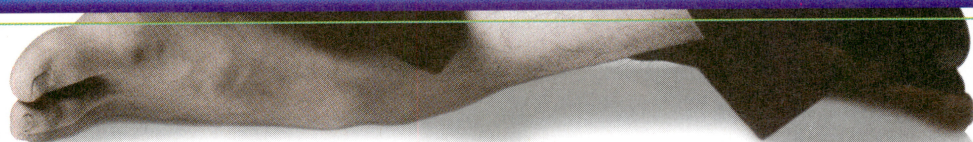
One Step Ahead

Keep in mind that if you do have a digital video camcorder with an analog input, like Canon's Elura2 or Sony's DCR-TRV20, you've already got everything you need to convert old analog footage. Just use an RCA cable or S-video cable to connect your analog camcorder to the digital camcorder. Record the footage onto DV, and edit the copy with iMovie.



Pan

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Three for the Road

Road trip, summer camp, or a visit with Grandma

— no matter how much fun traveling is, packing is a lot of work. We've put together three workshops that don't demand fancy technical tricks, but that make getting there, wherever "there" is, flow like music.

Workshop 1 Crank Up the Digital Jukebox

By Jackie Dove

Don't Leave Home Without Your Tunes



Everyone needs music to travel by. If the family is in for a long "are we there yet?" drive and no one likes the same music, use iTunes to make a custom CD including everything from the Beatles to Beethoven (or a separate CD for everyone in the family). iTunes, Apple's free MP3 player/encoder, lets you burn CDs on your built-in Power Mac G4 drive or on some 30 third-party CD-RW drives. So get ready to burn!

But that's not all. With iTunes (www.apple.com/itunes), you also can listen to your favorite songs, play MP3 streams from the Internet, encode music CDs into MP3 format for uploading to a portable MP3 player, and tune in to Internet radio.

1. From Track to iTunes

To import cuts from a CD into the iTunes library, place a CD in the drive. iTunes displays a list of all the tracks on the CD. Double-click on the selection you want to hear. If you want to add selections to the library, uncheck any songs that you don't want, then hit the Import button on the upper right of the player. That action translates the selection into an MP3 file. An Internet connection will let you automatically get titles and other information about your tracks from Gracenote (www.gracenote.com), a disc recognition service formerly known as Internet CD Database or CDDb. This site gives you such information as disc name, artist name, length of song, musical genre, time, and more about your tunes.



2. Grab MP3s

In order to burn a CD, you'll need to gather your MP3 files. If you already have a collec-

What You'll Need

1. CDs or MP3 files
2. iTunes 1.1
3. Mac OS 9.0.4 or 9.1
4. Headphones (optional)

tion of MP3 files on your hard drive, use iTunes to organize your selections by choosing File: Add to Library. Organize the MP3 files on your hard drive first, though, as iTunes references the files from exactly where they are located when you add them to the library. If you move them later, iTunes will lose track. Or you can move the MP3 files to your iTunes music folder (in the Documents folder on your hard drive).

3. Burn It Up

If you have a CD burner in your Power Mac G4 or a compatible third-party burner, choose New Playlist from the File menu and drag your songs from the library in the order you want to hear them. Then click the Burn CD button on the Playlist Window. Insert a blank CD-R in your Mac, and click Burn CD again.

Playing with Friends

How to Stream Music with iTunes

Want to share your music library with others on a network? You can stream iTunes audio files without having to move or copy individual songs. To do this, you need to have a network set up and AppleTalk on.

On the computer that contains the music library:

1. Enable File Sharing from the control strip.
2. Click Users & Groups and double-click on Guest.
3. Check File Sharing and Program Linking.
4. Highlight the iTunes folder and, under the File Menu, choose Get Info: Sharing.
5. Check Share This Item and its Contents.
6. Select Read Only from the pulldown menu for the listings Owner/User Group and Everyone.

On the computer you want to play music:

1. Open Chooser.
2. Select AppleShare.
3. Choose the computer that holds your tunes.
4. Type in a password or log in as guest if needed.
5. Click OK when iTunes appears as an option in a dialog box.
6. Launch iTunes by double-clicking its icon.
7. Drag and drop the shared iTunes folder from the first computer to the iTunes playlist of this one.
8. When your music library appears, double-click on any song you want to hear and it will stream from one computer to the other.

Getting to Know iTunes

Burning CDs is great, but that's only part of the fun of using iTunes. You also can listen

to your favorite songs, play MP3 streams from the Internet, encode music CDs into MP3 format for uploading to a portable MP3 player, and tune in to Internet radio.

1. It's Under Control

iTunes has five major controls. The control panel lets you play, pause, and control volume. The lower left hand

appears in the Source List.

3. Voices on the Radio

iTunes also lets you listen to streaming audio directly from Internet radio stations and other MP3 Websites. You can even download MP3 selections to your library by dragging and dropping the selection into the main library.

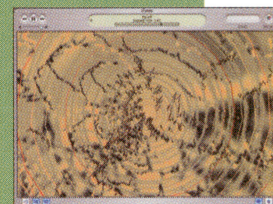
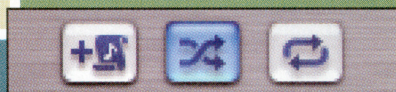
4. Seeing Is Believing

To view graphical visualizations of your songs, click the Flower button on the lower right hand corner of the player, and watch the music beat generate designs.

5. Where's That Tune?

Never again will you rummage through a huge music collection to find one song. The sophisticated iTunes search and sort functions can search by title, artist name, genre, timing, and a host of other characteristics specified by the View Options command. In the main library, hit the Browse button on the upper right hand corner of the player to search by

portable MP3 player? Just connect the player to your Mac (a list of compatible MP3 players is available on Apple's Website), then drag and drop the files onto the player's icon, which



Workshop 2 Spin a Psychedelic Design

How to Label a CD Like a Pro

By Ross Tibbits



What good is a CD if you don't know what's on it? Labeling your freshly minted CD and its jewel case puts the finishing touch on personalized music collections or images from family vacations.

With \$25 and about 20 minutes to spend, you can get slick results.

1. Search and Supply

A CD labeling kit like Neato's Labeling System (\$22; www.neato.com) gives you CD labels, design software, jewel case inserts and a label applicator. You can also download free designs from sites like eMemorex (www.ememorex.com). These work with CD labels you can buy online (www.cdlabels.com) or at the local printing supply store; a pack of 10 labels costs about \$3.



Keep your printer in mind when choosing labels. Metallic labels may not turn out well with an inkjet, as the printer can absorb most of the ink. And a laser printer might melt

glossy labels, although metallic labels are fine. Finally, make sure to choose labels that state they are safe for CDs. The adhesive used in regular labels can damage the disc or come off during playback as the disc's temperature rises in the drive.

2. Bend the Imagination

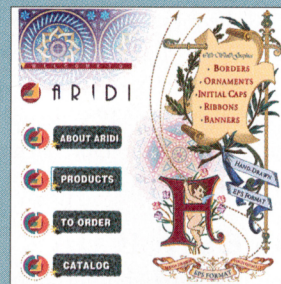
Templates are quick and colorful, but a prefabricated

design lacks the spark of a homemade pattern. Your only design limitation is whether or not you

have a color printer.

Uninspired? Browse Aridi Designs

(www.aridi.com), a site with hundreds of intricate medieval themes – or just take a look at CDs released by your favorite musicians.



Once the design is ready, create a text box.

Choose a special font, change its color, and increase its size to make it easier to read. Some labeling programs even let you bend the text into a semi-circle around the center of the disc.

3. Testing, Testing, 123...

Before inserting the CD labels into your printer, print a test sheet on plain paper to see how it looks. Check the margins to make sure the design fits the width of the label. Once satisfied, insert your special CD labels and print away. Do the same with the jewel case inserts.

4. Make It Stick

Many CD labeling packages come with an application device. Typically, place the label sticky side up over the cone at the center of the applicator. Then place the CD face down on the cone and press firmly. The cone acts as a guide and helps the label go on smoothly. Read the directions for your applicator to double-check its recommended procedure.

If you don't have an applicator, you can try to place the label on yourself, but be very careful that bubbles or wrinkles don't form. An uneven label will cause problems when you try to play the CD. You must also align the hole in the label with the hole in the disc. Practice with junk CDs first because once the label goes on, you won't be able to get it off without ruining the disc.

Now slide the jewel case labels into the case, and snap your CD into place.

What You'll Need

1. CD labeling or graphics software
2. Designs
3. Adhesive CD labels
4. Jewel case inserts
5. Printer
6. Label applicator



MacHomeWorkshops

Workshop 3 Ready to Wear

By Sandy Brundage

How to Make a T-shirt That'll Double as a Souvenir

What You'll Need

1. Inkjet or laser printer
2. Heat transfer paper
3. Cotton T-shirt
4. Pillowcase
5. Digital photo
6. Iron
7. Image editor like T-Shirt Factory or AppleWorks

So many clothes, so little space in the suitcase. Why not

make a family T-shirt just for the trip? After a

few minutes in front of the Mac, and some quality time with an iron, you'll be

decked-out in hit-the-highway style. We used Nova Development's T-Shirt Factory (\$40; www.novadevelopment.com) but you can do this with

AppleWorks and heat

transfer paper

(around \$1 per sheet; available from print supply shops like www.conde.com). If you're buying paper, make sure you get the right kind for your printer. Transfer paper made for an inkjet, like the paper included with T-Shirt Factory, won't work in a laser printer, and vice versa.



1. Say Cheese

Take a digital photo of your family, and transfer it to your Mac. If you have a digital camera, use the software that came with it for this step.

If you don't, get a friend who does to snap a shot or find a scanner to copy a print.

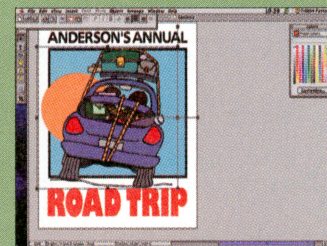
2. Spice It Up

Open up T-Shirt Factory (or your image editor), and take a look at your photo. Add any borders or text you want on the shirt. Try a bright, geometric frame around the photo if you're transferring to a white or black shirt.

3. Flip and Print

Once your image looks like something you'd be proud to wear, print it out on the heat transfer paper. Flip the image backwards before

printing if you're using AppleWorks so that it'll turn out right when ironed on to the shirt. If you are using T-Shirt Factory, don't worry about it because it'll flip for you. Print a preview copy to double-check margins and colors before moving on to the next step.



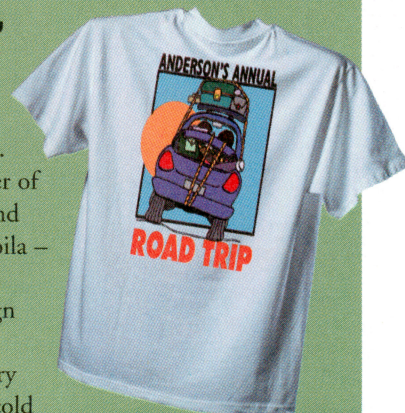
4. Put the Heat On

When the image is done, get out the iron. Let the iron heat to its highest setting, and make sure steam is off. Find a smooth, heat-tolerant surface, like a formica countertop, and lay down an unwrinkled pillowcase. Don't use an ironing board; it disperses the heat too fast for the transfer to stick.

Put the T-shirt on the pillowcase, making sure it lies completely flat. Place the transfer paper printed-side down on the shirt right where you want the picture. Then run the iron smoothly over the entire piece of transfer paper for at least four minutes, pressing firmly.

5. Ready, Set, Wear

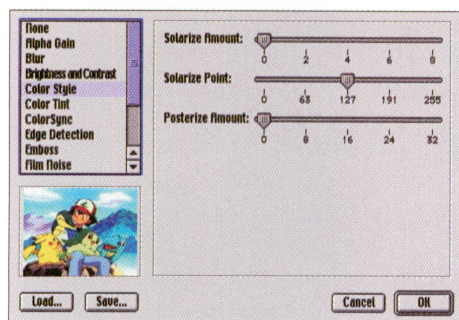
Turn off the iron and let the shirt cool for one minute. Then lift up a corner of the transfer paper and slowly pull it off. Voila – shirt to go! To help your new shirt design last, turn the shirt inside out on laundry day and wash it in cold water without bleach. Then just toss it into the dryer on the regular cotton setting.



Simple QuickTime Effects

iMovie is certainly a great application. It's a little too hefty for simple editing, however, and the fact that it requires a digital video camera is a bit of a bummer for many of us. There are few low-end applications available that allow us to simply compress or apply filters to QuickTime movies we've made with our KriiterCams, iBots, or myVideo digitizers. Oddly enough, the answer to our simple wish may already reside in our computers. Apple's QuickTime Player (with the

\$30 QuickTime Pro upgrade) can perform many simple editing jobs. You can copy, paste, delete video segments, and even set masks to alter the shape of the video file. The best features come into play when it's time to save and compress the document. Select Export from the File menu. Name your new movie, then select Movie to QuickTime Movie from the Export pop-up menu. For best quality results, select 2X CD-ROM (Sorenson) from

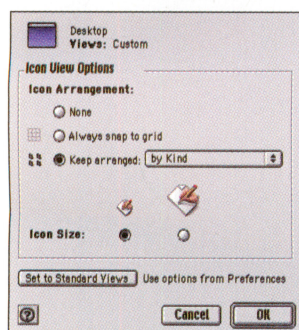


the Use pop-up menu. Now for the fun part. Click the Options button at the right. A Movie Settings window will appear. The first section listed is video, and within it, you'll find a button called Filters. Clicking this button brings you to yet another window, offering a large set of video filters. You can adjust Brightness and Contrast, Color Saturation, and even apply arty filters like Edge Detection and Emboss. My favorite filter, however, is Film Noise. Apply this simple filter, and your movie will look like a well-worn film reel from the 1930s!

Desktop Organization Made Simple

Some people love to have icons scattered here and there on their desktops. I'll confess I'm not one of those people. That's not to say I

obsessively file everything in its proper place, lest a stray file litter my desktop. My desktop still serves as a catchall for items I really don't feel like sorting. That said, I keep it neat and tidy with clever desktop view preferences. Click once on your desktop background to ensure all files are deselected. Now, select View Options from the View menu. The preferences panel for the desktop then appears. Click the radio button next to Keep arranged, and then select by Kind from the adjacent pop-up menu. This tells the Finder to sort all items on the desktop according to their classification: folders are kept with folders, Word files are kept with Word files, and so on. The icons will flow from top to bottom, right beneath your hard drive icon. Users with small displays (or lots of junk on their desktops) can then choose the smaller icon size to maximize screen real estate. Just click OK, and your desktop will organize itself!



Heard But Not Seen

There's little doubt that iTunes' beautiful, brushed metal interface is easy on the eyes. There's a time and a place for everything, however. Sooner or later you'll need to buckle down and get some work done, and iTunes' pretty interface will clutter up your background. It doesn't have to be that



way, though. You can keep things tidy by clicking the resize button in the top right corner of the iTunes interface. In an instant, it is transformed into a small, rectangular window sporting play controls and song information. Click the caret next to the song currently playing, and the display morphs into a graphic equalizer. It's really sweet! iTunes can be found at www.apple.com/itunes/.

Did you know...

There are more than **18,000 products for your Macintosh?** Find them all at Apple's Macintosh Products Guide Website:

<http://guide.apple.com/usindex.html>

Mac OS Update Watch

Z-Disc Burner

Apple's Z-Disc Burner is a simple utility that allows iMacs and Power Macintoshes with built-in CD records to create data CDs. It does not currently work with third-party drives. You can find the software at <http://asu.info.apple.com/swupdates.nsf/artnum/n11966> (4MB).

iTunes 1.1

Apple's MP3 player software now rolls in support for over 25 external CD recorders and adds several keyboard command alternatives. You can download iTunes 1.1 at <http://asu.info.apple.com/swupdates.nsf/artnum/n12001> (3.2MB).

Mac Os Runtime for Java 2.2.4

This update to Apple's Java engine corrects a security issue that would allow Java applets to access the computer's hard drive. It also includes performance enhancements and better memory management than earlier versions of the soft-

ware. It can be found at <http://asu.info.apple.com/swupdates.nsf/artnum/n11927> (4.8MB).

Mac OS 9.1

Apple's long awaited update to Mac OS 9 has finally arrived. Mac OS 9.1 improves the stability of the Mac OS, and it rolls in expanded support for iTools and Multiple Users. Sherlock 2 now features an entertainment channel, and the Finder has gained a new Windows menu to ease navigation through crowded desktops. The update requires Mac OS 9 and can be downloaded from www.info.apple.com/support/macos9/9.1download.html (70MB or 15 segments of 4.6MB). The update is also available on CD for \$20; visit www.apple.com/macos/ for more information.

DVD-ROM Firmware 1.0

Get improved audio extraction from the DVD-ROM drives of Power Macintosh G4 Cube, iMac DV+, and iMac DV SE systems with this update. If you regularly use Apple's iTunes to rip audio tracks from your favorite CDs, you'll want to install this update. for best quality It can be downloaded from <http://asu.info.apple.com/swupdates.nsf/artnum/n11914> (796k).

Virus Alert?

A harrowing event for a new user is receiving an email message warning of a dire new virus. The message might be well intended, but more often than not, it's just a hoax. This type of email message has become almost as annoying as an actual virus. Recipients are urged to forward the message to everybody in their address book, creating a vicious cycle of junk mail. Visit a troubleshooting site (such as MacFixIt.com) to verify that the virus exists and is a real threat before forwarding the message.

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SOHO Websites

Link Your Small Business to the Web

This year, Internet-based businesses experienced dramatic changes in their stock prices, in many cases radically reducing their value. Dot-com business models relied too heavily on “clicks” to their Websites; unrealistic e-commerce expectations led to overblown projections on revenue streams from their Web presence.

News like this doesn't leave small businesses clamoring for Websites. Yet, a presence on the Web is possible (and profitable) if approached correctly.

Typically, small business owners don't have a venture capitalist's money to spend, and therefore must not rely completely on the Web to fund their business. The key is

By Ross Tibbits

to continue traditional business practices while deciding whether or not a Web presence is a useful supplement.

If it is, a variety of ways exist to increase interaction with customers.

Content

To those familiar with your product or services, your Website should represent everything they appreciate about your business. Create a design concept that incorporates the most important characteristics of your business. There are many well-designed sites on the Web that can offer you great inspiration. Look to the sites that you visit regularly. Take note of varying designs and user-friendliness issues that you might incorporate into your site.

Although the Web offers almost unlimited space for images, video, and text, keep your design simple. Create an uncluttered site by limiting the number of pages and links, requiring less navigation on the visitor's part. Too much information overwhelms visitors. Ultimately, these design qualities save time and money, and keep viewers returning.

Draw your design on paper. This low-tech approach lets



you see how different elements interact with each other prior to purchasing software or hiring a consultant. Incorporate text, digital images, and graphics into your site. Develop a few different designs. This is an excellent opportunity to brainstorm ideas with co-workers and friends. As a onetime Website producer, I can testify to the importance of having people review a design and proofread text as a means of sharpening a message. Once it's on the Web where everyone can see it, mistakes reflect poorly on your business.

If you plan on using images, remember a couple of key points. Images on the Web are viewed at 72 dots-per-inch (dpi) on Macs — newer PCs display 96 dpi. This is important when presenting intricate items such as watches and jewelry, or other very small images that are difficult to view at lower resolutions. Consider using thumbnails that the viewer can click on for a larger view. Thumbnails help a page load faster, too.

For any item you plan to scan for the Web, I'd recommend scanning at a higher resolution, perhaps 300 dpi, then adjusting the size and resolution for the Web in Photoshop so that you retain the image's clarity.

As with images, large text documents are sometimes best viewed at the visitor's discretion. Converting text files and scanned images to Portable Document Format (PDF) for individuals to download at their convenience reduces the number of pages on your site. This excellent format works on any computer and takes up little disk space. Viewers simply click on the specified link to download, then they can view the PDF file using Adobe Acrobat (www.adobe.com). But also consider translating the text into HTML in order to print pages directly from the screen.

Web Options

Now that you've planned out your site, its contents, and reviewed it with your peers, decide the details of how, where, and when you want it launched. This is an important step prior to physically building your site. Surprisingly, there are more choices out there than you may think. Options include everything from free, do-it-yourself creations to those that require significant time and money to implement. The key is to understand the complexity of your site and to be realistic about your interest and ability in maintaining it.

Dot-com businesses like Bigstep, eCongo, and HotBiz offer Website production online. Looking to the Web for these services reveals numerous packages and tools with which to create a portal on the Web. If you need e-commerce, there are plans to choose from, which are likely to meet large and small budgets alike. Think of them as virtual storefront tools.

Bigstep, for instance, has everything you need to create a virtual storefront. Following a simple registration process, you're given a Bigstep domain name. This URL address allows you to reserve space on their system and conduct business online once your site is operational.

To purchase your own domain name, Bigstep.com has partnered with Network Solutions, the top provider of domain names worldwide. You'll choose from domain names ending in .com, .edu, .org, and .net. The service fee for registering a name is \$70 for the first two years of service.

Like other do-it-yourself sites, Bigstep's set-up procedure is quite simple. Point and click to select templates, colors, fonts, and images to include on your site. E-commerce provisions require registering for an online merchant account with Bigstep's partner, Cardservice International. There is no application fee required. After your application is approved, Bigstep takes 2.35% plus 20 cents for each online transaction. There's also a monthly fee of about \$25 for Web hosting. Depending on the level of service you need, developing a site can take as little as six hours for the most basic site. More advanced sites require added time and must be managed more carefully to update inventories and such.

You're the Webmaster



Although using a business like Bigstep is the simplest way to create a Web presence, that route may not meet your small business needs. Creative layout, unique images, integrated text, and e-commerce provisions can require more powerful tools than free services provide.

If that's the case, look into Web authoring programs. They are much improved over last years' offerings, mak-

ing it easier than ever to implement high-end tools like animation, 3D text, and great-looking buttons. No longer are you required to learn HTML in order to make a page look just right. Adobe's GoLive 5, Macromedia's Dreamweaver 4, and Freeway 4 are more complex than your average word processor, but they now include well-designed tutorials to get started.

Programs such as GoLive5, Dreamweaver 4, and even Photoshop 6 are designed to create great looking Websites, at a price. Typically, these programs cost a few hundred dollars. Upgrades are reasonably priced if you've got an older version on-hand. These programs are particularly useful because once you understand the basics, adding and maintaining your site is a relatively simple affair.

The advantages to learning a Web authoring program are many. First and foremost, you'll have creative control over the site. Second, site updates are easily accomplished, and last, it saves you money — even if outside consulting is occasionally required.

Web Sharing

Like iTools' HomePage, Web Sharing, which comes standard on Macs, makes getting your site on the Web easy. This program allows you to host a Web-site from your own computer. You won't have to

Serving your own Web page is as simple as a Control Strip click or activating your site from within the Web Sharing control panel.

worry about uploading files to your ISP server or connecting to an FTP site. In essence, you are combining HomePage's ease of publishing to the Web with the creativity you've implemented with a particular Web authoring program.

Your Website consists of files and fold-

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ers located within a larger Web folder. These files include your homepage, typically titled "index.html", which is linked to a series of other HTML pages you've created. Web Sharing simply accesses this folder and allows other people to read the contents of this particular folder via their Web browser. The Web Sharing program automatically links a visitor to the index.html page in the designated folder. The visitors' experience is only limited by the bandwidth of your ISP connection and the hours that your computer is operating and online, because your computer acts as the server.

When setting up your own page, be sure to test it with different browsers and a PC so that everyone who visits will have the same experience.

Activating Web Sharing takes minutes — literally. Go to the Apple Menu control panel (or your Control Strip) and select Web Sharing. The Web Sharing window appears, and allows you to choose a folder from which to host your Website. Click Start, and Web Sharing immediately displays a URL address (your computer's unique TCP/IP number) such as <http://151.20.149.57>. Share this number with clients and associates, and they've got immediate access to your site.

Web Sharing also serves as a file-sharing tool. Identify a folder as the Web folder from the Web Sharing program window, and share those files with anyone you choose.

The importance of reviewing your Website prior to its launch cannot be overemphasized. Web Sharing makes this process easy on you and those reviewing your site. Encourage them to provide feedback. Then, when you are ready, invite clients to visit your creation.

Hire a Consultant

You may prefer to use a consultant's services to build a Website. Experienced producers will build a Website to your specifications in a short time, depending on their availability and the condition of your media. If you've done your homework by penciling out a design and gathering all text and images, the process should be straight-

forward. Your detailed plans save everyone time and money.

The benefits of consultants are many. They already know Website design, which means you won't have to learn. They can incorporate all the bells and whistles you like, turning-out a design that'll represent your business well. But like doctors and mechanics, some consultants are better than others. Try asking friends and business associates for recommendations. The beauty of the Web is that a consultant doesn't have to live near you. If they've been recommended but aren't local, consider communicating your design concept via phone, email, or fax.

You Make the Call

Understanding the range of services available to a small business for creating a Web presence isn't hard. The difficult part is deciding how and if you want to market your business online, and how much money and time you're willing to spend. Focus your efforts, and come away from the experience confident that you made the right decision. **MHJ**

Online Services

Bigstep
www.bigstep.com

Hotbiz
www.hotbiz.com

eCongo
www.econgo.com

Software Resources

Adobe Systems, Inc.
www.adobe.com
Photoshop 6, \$610
GoLive 5, \$285

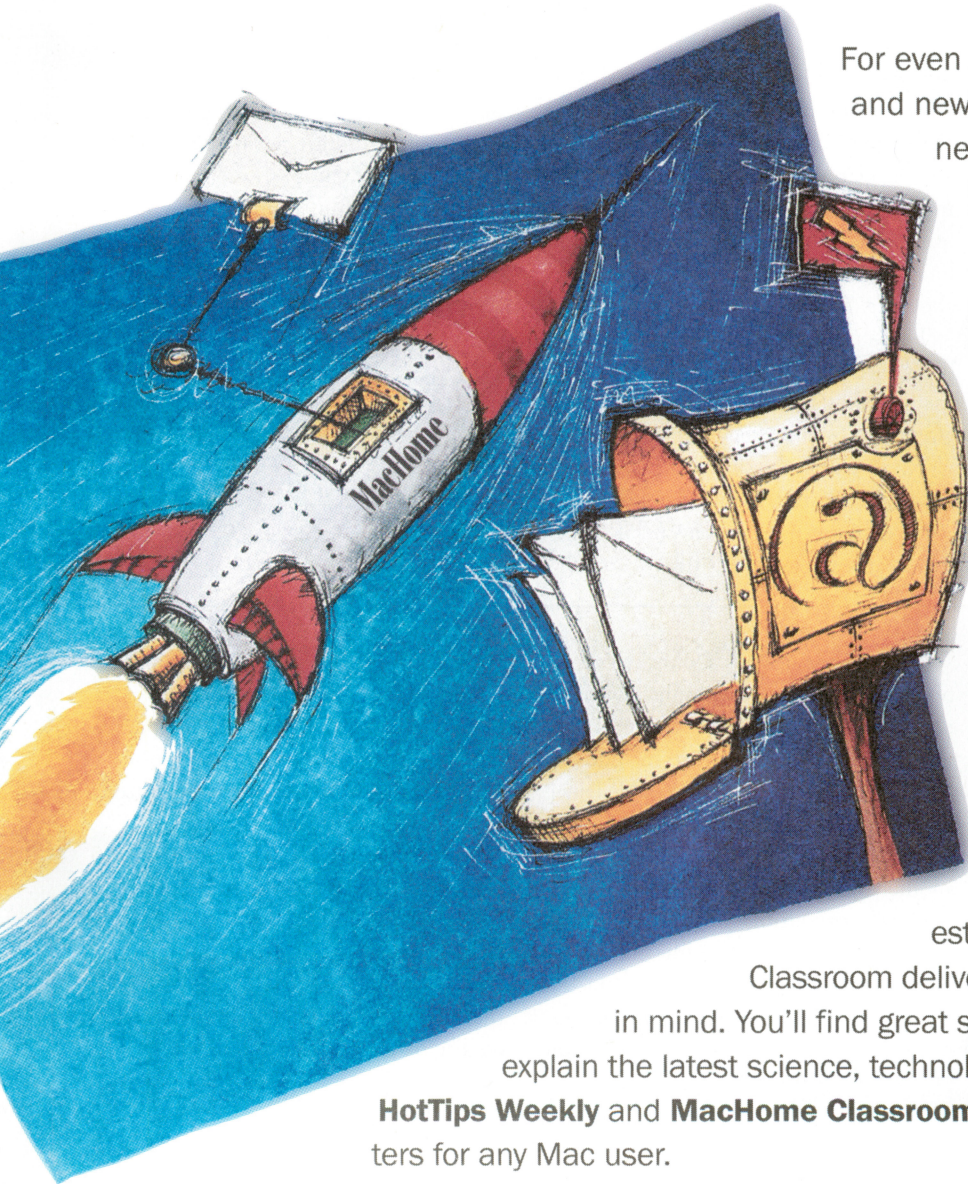
Macromedia, Inc.
www.macromedia.com
Flash 5, \$300
Dreamweaver 4, \$300
Fireworks 4, \$300

SoftPress Systems Limited
www.softpress.com
Freeway 3, \$250

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HipZip

The interface, function, and logic of the HipZip MP3 player are exceptional. Its stumbling block, however, is in the PocketZip removable storage. While a good value, the 40MB disks aren't big enough to hold most CDs in MP3 format. In spite of this, its other features make it a capable player.

Installation worked without any difficulties. After adding Iomega's included USB driver and connecting the provided cable, the HipZip was recognized as an external drive; you can store anything on its disks.

The included MusicMatch software can encode and upload tracks, but the

simplest way to position files is the Finder. Just drag songs to the PocketZip disk.

The HipZip retains the ability to organize files when disconnected from the computer. Even while a track is playing, you can create and modify a playlist, changing the order of songs. The display and navigation are simple and clear; maneuvering through the menus to access features like random play is intuitive. The built-in, rechargeable battery provides about ten hours of play.

The supplied headphones are small, but they deliver full sound. Even then, the built-in bass and treble equalizer can effectively enhance the tone of the music.

The PocketZip format is a problem. While the Flash RAM used in other players costs about five times as much as a \$10 PocketZip disk, Flash RAM can

come in 128MB sizes. The 40MB disks only hold 40 minutes of MP3s, limiting consecutive playtime.

The Final Decision The interface and complete sound quality make the intuitive HipZip a portable MP3 player to consider. Because it uses PocketZip disks, this player isn't for anyone looking for long, uninterrupted music sessions. However, extra storage is cheap, so the HipZip is still worth recommending.

— Zack Stern



What Is an MP3 Player?

MP3 is an audio format that takes about a tenth of the space of a CD. This means that an hour of music in MP3 format takes about 60MB of space, instead of a CD's 600MB. Because the files are small but retain similar quality to CDs, they're easy to take anywhere with a portable MP3 player. This hardware plays music away from a computer, just like a portable CD player.

Jukebox 6000

The Archos Jukebox 6000 is a great option to play a lot of MP3s; it's reasonably small, packs 6GB of storage, and works as an external hard drive. The Jukebox 6000, however, can't manage MP3s on the road and includes confusing documentation, which makes it an imperfect solution.

The Jukebox 6000 connects via an included USB cable. After installing the USB drivers, the Jukebox 6000 functions as an external drive on the desktop. Store any kind of file on the drive, but MP3s are all that will work when away from a Mac.



The Jukebox 6000 is about the size of two audiotapes stacked together. While not as tiny as other MP3 players, this is one of the smallest devices to include a hard drive. Its built-in rechargeable battery gives up to eight hours of playback, or else the provided AC adapter adds another way to power the device.

On-player controls shuttle through songs, and an LCD names the current tune and helps navigate between tracks.

A built-in treble and bass equalizer allows audio adjustment. The 6GB drive is big enough to hold the content of about 150 CDs — once compressed into MP3 — but these tracks are hard to organize. The included MusicMatch software turns your CDs into MP3s, but can't create a mobile playlist. The only way to play back songs is by folder.

Although installing and using the

Jukebox 6000 is fairly logical, should you have any problems, the provided documentation will be of little help. References are made to prototype products, and the information is poorly organized.

The Final Decision The Jukebox 6000 is a powerful MP3 player with drawbacks. Organizing 6GB of songs is difficult, especially on the road, and the documentation answers few questions. But the small size, hard drive capability, and quality playback make this device an attractive way to keep your entire music library with you.

— Zack Stern

rating



\$300, Iomega Corporation
www.iomega.com
800-697-8833



Intuitive controls, cheap storage format, functions as external drive



PocketZip disks only hold 40MB

rating



\$350, Archos Technology
www.archos.com
949-453-1121



6GB drive holds thousands of MP3s, small size, works as a hard drive



Organizing songs is difficult, no mobile playlists

Canon PowerShot Pro90 IS

The Canon PowerShot Pro90 IS

comes packaged in an ergonomic body. Your right hand fits comfortably around the rubbery grip that allows easy access to the many controls lying close to your thumb and forefinger. The grip also contains a display panel for shutter speed, aperture setting, image compression, file format, spot metering, and manual focus, giving you a range of control.

Use the camera's 10X optical zoom lens to capture remarkable images at up to 3.34 megapixels. There's also a 2X and 4X digital zoom for those far-off shots. Unfortunately, the zoom bezel on the camera's nose felt loose and of marginal quality. The nifty image stabilizer ensures blur-free images on all but the most challenging shots. Although there's an adept auto focus, manual focus is

required under certain circumstances, and could use its own bezel instead of requiring pushing a series of buttons.

Images are captured on a standard Compact Flash card; depending on the size of the card, it can store hundreds of pictures. The Pro90 IS performed excellently outdoors and in low light conditions (using the automatic flash). Images were crisp, colors bright, and moving objects froze in time.

Photostitching, which creates panoramic images, adds an extra function. Unfortunately, the tripod mount on the camera's base is off-center, compromising the stitching feature.

Making quick movie clips is easy with the LCD monitor on the Pro90 IS. Flip it out, rotate it up or down, and even fold it into the camera and you can still see the



display. Such LCD versatility is welcome for those tough-to-get above or below shots.

The Final Decision

There's a lot to like about the Pro90 IS. It's packed-with gizmos like an image stabilizer, photostitching, and even movie making. The minor flaws in the zoom bezel, manual focus, and tripod mount shouldn't dissuade you from considering this exciting camera.

— Ross Tibbitts

rating

\$1,200, Canon U.S.A., Inc.
www.usa.canon.com
800-652-2666

 Great ergonomics, photostitching, movie functions, retractable LCD

 Loose fitting zoom bezel, off-center tripod mount, taxing manual focus

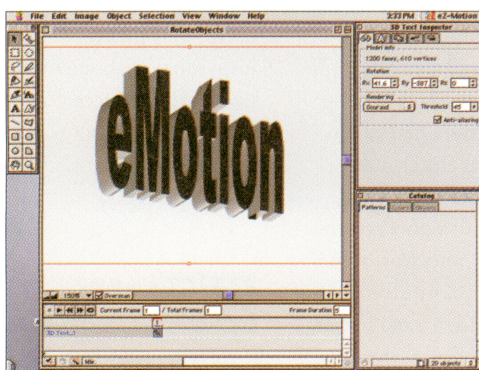
eZ-Motion

Web animation doesn't need to be difficult. I followed the step-by-step instructions in eZ-Motion's tutorial and created interesting animations in just minutes.

Both the tutorial and the in-depth user manual provide well-written instructions, despite the fact that they use a PC interface for diagrams. This will, on

occasion, leave you looking a bit longer for noted tools on the diagrams, but it's no reason not to use the program, which operated flawlessly.

Creating animation begins by opening



a new file and selecting from supplied templates for banners, buttons, and videos. Animate a banner by selecting a simple shape, like a circle. Draw the circle, then go to Outline and Fill Inspector to select an outline and color. Move the shape to a desired location within your Canvas, then select the number of

frames you'd like to create in the Animation panel. For each frame, move the object through time, and change its size, shape, and color along the way. When you're done, press Play, and the animation begins.

If you are interested in rotating text, select the 3D text tool, and enter text into the 3D Text tab. Choose font, size, color, proportions, opacity, and more. You can also set 3D text for precise rotation by entering spe-

cific data for the X, Y, and Z axes. Otherwise, choose free rotation and move the text at will with your mouse. You can then move it through time, just as with any object.

No matter what kind of Web authoring program you have, eZ-Motion is likely to export to it. Save animated files as GIF, Flash, QuickTime, Real Video, or Windows Media files.

The Final Decision You'll create interesting and functional 3D animation in no time at all with eZ-Motion. If you can get over the annoying Windows-based diagrams in the manuals, this is a great program to spice-up your Website.

— Ross Tibbitts

rating

\$180, Beatware, Inc.
www.beatware.com
650-556-7900

 Well-designed software, save and export option to popular Web formats

FireNet

With FireNet software and cables, quick networking with FireWire is a reality. The FireNet setup even has some advantages over 10/100 BaseT Ethernet in speed and setup.

(Gigabit Ethernet still has setup intricacies compared to FireNet, but speed is comparable.) The only problems with FireNet are its incompatibilities, and it has few benefits for established networks.

Each Mac (or even network with PCs) just requires a FireNet license and extension. To network, select FireNet in the AppleTalk and TCP/IP control panels, and connect 6-pin FireWire cables between the computers. A FireWire hub helps if you run out of ports. This setup is quicker and easier than creating an

Ethernet network, which requires routers and more advanced knowledge.

With Mac OS 9, FireNet is slightly faster than Ethernet networking. We transferred 400MB files between computers in minutes. Also, if many people are sharing files at the same time,

FireNet doesn't grind to a halt like Ethernet does.

Unfortunately, FireNet has difficulties that aren't the fault of the developer. The FireWire controller

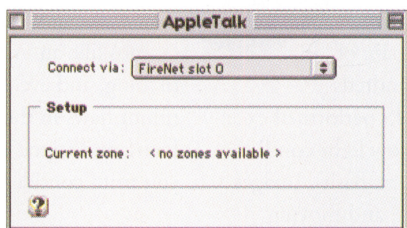
chips in some computers, like our iMac DV, have quirks that cause FireNet to misbehave, so be sure to investigate before buying. A free, 10 minute demo is available at www.unibrain.com to test your Macs. That said, the rest of our Macs worked without a hitch.

If you need to share Ethernet printers or an Internet connection, FireNet can

do it with extra software or hardware. Research the steps to adapt FireNet to your needs; it may be more trouble than it's worth. Instead, FireNet is best suited for new, small, or temporary networks because bridges that go between FireWire and Ethernet are still new.

The Final Decision FireNet is a great option for local networks to share files and applications because of its simplicity and speed. It doesn't yet have a lot of practical use for established networks, but is a viable choice for new networks.

— Zack Stern



rating ★★★★★

\$50, Unibrain Inc.
www.unibrain.com
925-866-3000

Intuitive setup, requires no hardware beyond FireWire cables

Incompatible with Ethernet devices without extra steps

Samsung ML-4600

One compact and relatively inexpensive laser printer is the Samsung ML-4600.

The ML-4600's upright stance and small 13 x 13 inch footprint are irregular, but welcome, space-saving features. Upright paper trays pop out of the top rather than the front of the printer. Its rear tray holds up to 150 sheets of plain paper, while the one in front accepts envelopes and heavy weight paper — saving you from repeatedly replacing regular paper. Despite their space-saving benefits, the trays collect dust or anything else dropped on the printer.

A small trap door on the face of the



ML-4600 opens to allow heavy gauge paper a straight exit, preserving print and paper quality. Without experimenting, you might not discover this nice touch, because the manual is limited to a large quick guide that fails to mention complete functions.

When it's time to print, you'll see a print window with the common settings for Layout, Background Printing,

Paper Source, and specific applications settings. A setting for Darkness/Quality lets you choose either 300 or 600 dots per inch (dpi). 300 dpi looks good to the naked eye, and I printed eight pages a minute at this setting. Under a magnifier, you'll notice unpleasant notched edges on each character.

The 600 dpi setting (what Samsung advertises as 1,200 x 600 dpi) is impressive, though — edges are sharp, clean, and ink is spread evenly.

The ML-4600 uses a PostScript emu-

lation program called PCL 6. This should keep graphic designs smooth with evenly rendered lines. Unfortunately, the PCL 6 doesn't provide great quality graphics. If you require strong graphics capabilities, you'll need true PostScript, found on more expensive laser printers.

The Final Decision The ML-4600 is a useful and practical laser printer for an individual without intensive printing needs. It produces good quality prints relatively quickly for under \$300. But if you need high quality PostScript emulation and a good manual, keep shopping.

— Ross Tibbits

rating ★★★★★

\$299, Samsung Electronics
www.samsung.com
877-804-9949

Compact, dual paper trays

Paper trays exposed, CD-based manual, poor PostScript emulation, USB cable not included

Photo-Objects 50,000

If you're a graphic designer, Web artist, or small business owner, you know it's often a challenge to come up with classy, royalty-free clip art that hasn't been overused and doesn't need much editing.

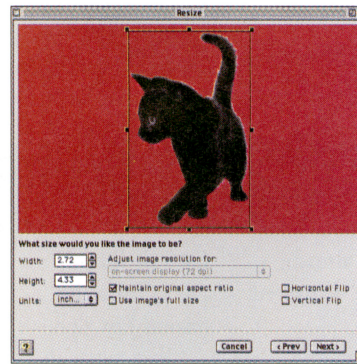
Photo-Objects 50,000 Premium Image Collection is a good application because it gives you photographic images that are masked and ready to use without your having to create transparencies in an image editing program. The program's built-in browser lets you view thumbnails of more than 80 categories of images on eight CDs. You can view them either all at once or by category. A keyword search brings up your result and the thumbnail to go with it.

The keywords functioned a bit strangely within categories, however. For instance, in the Animals category, when I typed "cat" I got "cattle," no "cats."

When I typed "dog" I got nothing. If I left the settings on All Categories, my search brought up images of the correct species. When you find the image you want, the program prompts you for the CD where it is located. You can also browse the full-color guidebook containing all the images on the CDs.

The best part about Photo-Objects is that an on-screen assistant lets you determine characteristics such as size, background color, and file format to give you appropriate images formatted for word processing, Website, presentation, or other types of documents.

Photo-Objects comes with PhotoFont Maker, a utility that lets you add photo textures to display text. A tab on the main interface lets you switch back and



forth between images and fonts. A drop-down menu lets you pick a font and apply a texture to it. You can even add your own textures.

The Final Decision If you use clip art, this program provides a vast variety of high-quality, ready-to-use images. PhotoFont Maker adds value to this easy-to-use package.

— Jackie Dove

rating

\$80, Hemera Technologies
www.hemera.com
819-772-8200

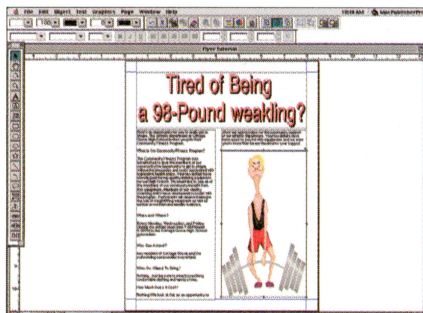
 Includes many images, easy to edit, already masked, royalty-free

 Too few ready-made textures in PhotoFont, textures aren't pictured in the image book

MacPublisher Pro

Not everyone needs the most powerful page layout program. When you just want to create simple newsletters, invitations, or invoices, a practical option is MacPublisher Pro.

You literally need to know nothing about page layout, graphic design, or publishing to use MacPublisher Pro. A toolbar along the left side of the page provides basic drawing and text import tools. Along the top, you'll find two more toolbars for formatting pages by changing text color, size, font, and paragraph alignment. It would be helpful if the boxes for color, shade, line, and line width (among others) had labels. With no icons or text to indicate their purpose, I was left wondering



which to use; I had to hold the cursor over each box to see pop-up titles.

When you open a new document in MacPublisher Pro, you can create pages from scratch or use one of over 50 templates. A quick run through its tutorial will explain importing text and graphics in minutes. To create your own, customized document, there are a host of tools for pagination and editing. Despite the lack of live scrolling on the scrollbar, you can move the page at will with the Pic-

ture Mover Tool.

The clip art collection that comes standard with MacPublisher Pro is voluminous. Preview the 170-page Clip Art Gallery booklet bundled with the program, which lists all the clip art and fonts available on the CD as a quick ref-

erence. But although the clip art is extensive, it's also cartoon-like, making it a limited resource for other styles.

The Final Decision If you don't have a lot of money to spend and you are neither technically savvy nor a graphics artist, take a look at MacPublisher Pro. It has the tools and templates you'll need to get started quickly, despite small lapses in design. Although the clip art is extensive, you might not find it applicable to your specific needs. Overall, though, this is a great way to start publishing.

— Ross Tibbitts

rating

\$40, MacSoft
www.wizworks.com/macsoft
800-229-2714

 Useful templates, comprehensive clip art collection, easy to use

 No live scrolling, toolbars lack text, clip art too thematic,

Rewind

Just last week, I threw away a file and emptied my trash — mistakenly. Realizing my error, I quickly looked for the file, but it was gone. If I'd already installed Rewind, I could have recovered the file.

Rewind is a must-have for anyone who relies on their Mac to store critical documents or personal items. From the moment you complete installation, Rewind keeps track of your hard drive's contents for recovery at a future date. This is done seamlessly by creating an Emergency Disk during installation. Unfortunately, the 100 - 300MB suggested installation is huge for a utility.

Rewind's tools include Rewind Disks, Rewind Files, and Emergency Startup Mode. Rewind Disks rewinds the drive to an earlier date, like a time machine. So, to undo an installation you completed yesterday or fix a system-wide malady that just

appeared, select a date, and click Rewind. Don't worry about undoing all your documents, just click Exclude Documents from the rewind function.

Okay, what if your computer is working fine, but like me, you mistakenly tossed a file and emptied the trash? Relax. Select Rewind Files, then Emptied Trash. There's your file listed in the program window. Choose that file, and click Rewind. Magically, your Trash is refilled with the previously deleted file. Remove the file from the Trash, and you're back in business — it's that easy and it works.

Finally, Rewind restores your system disk. Have you ever gotten a blinking question mark instead of a smiling Mac at startup? Restart while holding down the R key. This allows your Mac to boot



from the Emergency Disk you created during Rewind's installation. This disk (found on your Desktop) contains a copy of Rewind. Open Rewind Disks, and return your system to an earlier date — without bugs.

The Final Decision Rewind is a must-have tool for any kind of system recovery. If you've got room to spare for the Emergency Disk, this utility could bail you out of many jams.

— Ross Tibbitts

rating

\$79, Power On Software
www.poweronsoftware.com
800-344-9160

 Great file and system recovery tool

 Requires large amount of hard disk space for a utility

Mini CD-RW

Ripping the shrink-wrap off the included blank CD-RW was the hardest part of setting up the Archos Mini CD-RW drive. In five minutes, I had the drive burning an audio CD. However, using the drive requires a power outlet and a computer, effectively chaining it to the desktop. This lack of portability defeats the drive's small size and is a drawback that should push PowerBook owners to look elsewhere.

The silver drive is barely bigger than a paperback novel. At 18 ounces, it's not heavy, either, but that's more of a "gee whiz" factor. Despite its audio-out jack, the Mini CD-RW can't function as an independent CD player since it needs



a power outlet and a computer to burn or play CDs.

The Mini CD-RW comes in two connectivity options; I tested the USB version, bundled with a proprietary USB cable, but you can also order a FireWire version (\$319).

With the included copy of Adaptec's Toast 4.1, I burned a 432MB CD in about 20 minutes. The drive reads audio, video, or data files at 24X, and writes and rewrites at 4X. These speeds are in line with comparable burners. Don't expect much from the manual; it will get the drive

installed, but that's it. The design of the drive is awkward. The Mini CD-RW runs quietly after clicking loudly when powered up. Inserting and removing a disk is tough; an orange button locks and unlocks the lid.

It looks the same in either position, but the lid must be locked for operation. If you forget if it's locked, you'll play several rounds of "push the button and try the lid." Also, the lid hinges are stiff, so I had to pry the lid open.

The Final Decision The Archos Mini CD-RW drive packs a fast, quiet punch while burning a music, video, or data CDs. The lid design and an incomplete manual are minor drawbacks. But the major flaw is that there's no pick up and go, so if you want a portable CD burner and player, this isn't your drive.

— Sandy Brundage

rating

\$290, Archos
www.archos.com
949-453-1121

 Fast, quiet, small, easy to use

 No powered portability, incomplete manual

MacSOHO

Create a Shared PC and Mac Network

While the division between Mac and PC users may not be as dramatic as the schism between loyal Chevy and Ford owners, in our Mac hearts, we all know it's "Us against Them." Yet sometimes, we just might want to create a small network and share a file or two with a friendly PC user.

MacSOHO is one piece of software that will ease this process. This tool effortlessly hooks your Mac up to a PC for file sharing.

To create a mini-LAN (Local Area Network), you need to connect your Mac to the PC with a crossover Ethernet cable, or two regular Ethernet patch cables and an Ethernet hub. The MacSOHO software installs on the Mac, and sets up the file sharing settings, creating a shared files folder on your desktop. You won't even need to open the File Sharing or AppleTalk control panels.

By Eric Ross

Next, use MacSOHO to set up the Windows side of the share. Although the MacSOHO software won't add any software to the Windows computer, it will direct you to the network configuration window to check that you have NetBEUI communication software installed. Because the communication language MacSOHO uses to package and receive data between computers is NetBEUI protocol, instead of TCP/IP, any new settings won't affect your existing Internet configuration. This is helpful if a Mac is normally configured for another work environment.

To start sharing files, launch MacSOHO from the Mac. MacSOHO has a browser-like interface that locates other computers on your network. However, you'll need another MacSOHO software license to run more than one Mac on the same LAN. The simplest method of sharing files with the PC user is to drag a file into the shared files folder created by MacSOHO on the Mac desktop. On the PC, inside the My Networks folder, you'll see the contents of the shared folder that resides on the Mac desktop. The shared files can be opened, altered, and saved on any of the networked computers.

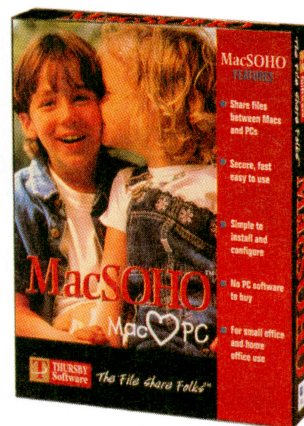
I had no problems using MacSOHO to set up my small PC-Mac network using a single \$15 crossover Ethernet cable. This system saved me from purchasing an Ethernet hub

(\$40-\$60) and an Ethernet patch cable (\$10) for each of the computers.

The only drawback is that MacSOHO doesn't let you share printers or dial-up Internet access.

Remember, while you can share files between a Windows computer and a Mac, the transferred data may be unreadable unless you have the right application. Regardless of the file type (graphic, word processing, spreadsheet) or direction of the sharing (PC to Mac or Mac to PC), MacSOHO performed flawlessly.

The Final Decision MacSOHO is great for sharing files in a small office with a mix of Macs and Windows computers. Unfortunately, MacSOHO is limited to sharing files. If you want to share printers and other devices over a large network, then you might want to consider another Thursby software solution, DAVE (\$199 Single User). The file-sharing network that MacSOHO creates has the potential to increase productivity by increasing collaboration, even with "Them." **MHJ**



rating ★★★★★

MacSOHO
\$100, Thursby Software Systems, Inc.
www.thursby.com
817-478-5070
Mac OS 8.6 - 9.0.4
Windows 95/98/ME/2000/NT 4
Ethernet adapter card, cables



Easy to use



Shared printing not supported

What I Did on My Summer Vacation

Put Your Vacation Photo Album Online

Sometimes it seems as if half the fun of a vacation away from home is the memories it evokes later, long after it's over. Hence the tons of snapshots passed around at the family get-together or perhaps the obligatory two-hour slide show. The next logical step is — you guessed it — putting those happy memories on the Web.

Building a family vacation Website lets you share your trip with others — especially those who can't make it 2,000 miles across the country to your living room or those who are just too antsy to sit through a slide show. Posting your vacation photos on the Web not only lets you select and edit your best pictures, it also gives viewers the luxury of seeing as many or as few as they want in one sitting, going back for repeat visits, and even ordering their own prints online.

By Jackie Dove

You may find that an online vacation album is a great supplement — or even an alternative — to the disorganized shoebox, the multiple envelopes of prints, or even the fancy photo album. But how do you get started?

Take the Shots

The best way to record your vacation (or even a Sunday evening stroll in your local park) is to take pictures. With a digital camera, you have the flexibility

of shooting and previewing your images, and they are already in digital format for Web posting.

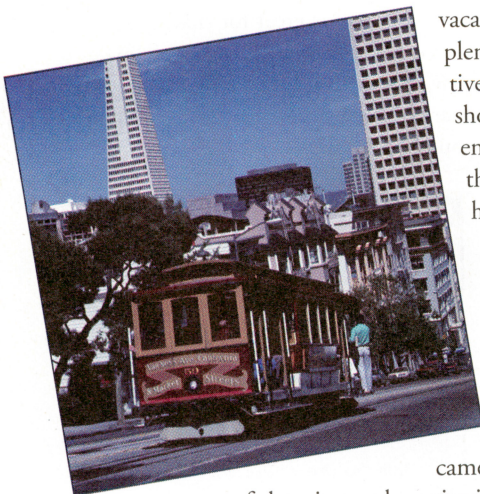
Digital cameras span a wide range in price and quality, from \$100 for an entry level camera to \$1,000 and up for high-end “prosumer” or professional models. Among the options are optical and digital zoom, rapid succession shooting, manual controls for focus, aperture, and white balance, onboard memory, LCD monitor, built-in flash, and a higher resolution Charge Coupled Device (CCD), a photographic sensor that determines image quality. Such features afford you greater shooting creativity and print quality. There are literally hundreds of digital cameras on the market and there's a camera to fit every circumstance.

Scan the Shots

What if you're perfectly comfortable with your non-digital camera? Or perhaps you've got envelopes of prints and you want to put those pictures on a Website. No problem. Just scan your favorites. Scanning digitizes your paper prints, translating them into the right format for the Web.

Scanners are a great deal these days. Not only have they dropped in price, but also they have significantly improved in image quality and ease of use. Even the cheapest flatbed scanners can capture images at 42-bit color, giving you trillions of colors. If you want folks to be able to print your images from the Web, scan them at 300 dots per inch (dpi) for good print quality.

Some photo finishers will also give you a photo CD (at extra charge) when they produce your prints. In that case,



you can upload the images from your CD-ROM to your Website. The photo finisher may provide uploading services, so inquire.

Size Matters

If you intend to use your images only for Web viewing, you don't need an expensive, high-resolution digital camera or scanner, as your images will be viewed at 72 dpi on the computer screen. However, if you want to enlarge or print your images, then you'll have to think about print resolution. For a 4 x 6-inch print, your original image should be shot and uploaded with a resolution of at least 1,280 x 960. If you just want to view the image on screen, a low resolution of 640 x 480 pixels works fine.

Always save your images in JPEG (Joint Photographic Experts Group) format, a compression scheme that shrinks the file size of your pictures. If you intend for folks to order reprints, use the lowest JPEG compression. Always save an original version of your shot at the highest quality you can. Crop and color correct your picture using a graphics program such as Graphic Converter (www.lemkesoft.de) or Photoshop. For the Web, the optimal file size is about 30k per image, but there's no hard and fast rule. The larger the file size, the longer the image takes to download.

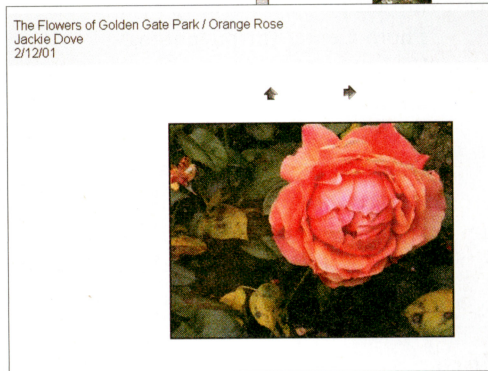
A good strategy is to create a Web page of clickable thumbnails — smaller images that are linked to larger images. That way viewers can look at the thumbnails, decide which images they want to see in detail, and wait just for their choices to download.

Posting the Pictures

Once you digitize your images, it's time to organize them for your Website. There are several ways to do this.

Photoshop 6's Web Photo Gallery option (www.adobe.com) is a convenient way to create a simple Web page, complete with clickable thumbnails, enlargements, and navigation. Just organize your images into a folder, edit and name your images, and issue the following command: File > Automate >

Web Photo Gallery. Choose the folder where your images are located and where you want them stored. The program will create the Web page for you and launch your browser so you can



see it. Then, just upload the folder to your server.

If you use Photoshop 6 to post your photo gallery to the Web, it's a good idea to open, edit, crop, color correct, and name your images before creating the gallery, so your images look the way you want them to.

You don't have to use the Web Photo Gallery, however. You can also compress your images as much as possible using the program's Save for Web feature so they will download quickly from your Website, and then use a Web authoring program to place them on the page.

You can also build an attractive Website with Apple's iTools, a free online program from Apple's Website (www.apple.com). iTools, available for all who use Mac OS 9 and Mac OS X, lets you create both Web photo albums and Websites by uploading images, text, and QuickTime movies to a part of the Apple server called iDisk. HomePage, Apple's online Website builder, lets you create picture albums and Web pages.

Go to the Apple Website, click the iTools tab, and download the installer and register for iTools. You get an email address and 20MB of free storage space



Adobe Photoshop 6 can create a Photo Gallery Web page. A page of clickable thumbnails lets you view all selections.

on iDisk. Upload your images to iDisk, which appears as a volume on your desktop, by dragging your files into the proper folder in your iDisk folder.

Posting a QuickTime movie you shot with your camcorder (and edited in iMovie, of course) is as easy as posting a still frame (see sidebar). When you're done arranging images, text, and iMovies, you can send an e-card with your new URL to anyone you want.

Share and Share Alike

There is an abundance of photo sharing Websites these days, and the trick is to

What's a CCD?

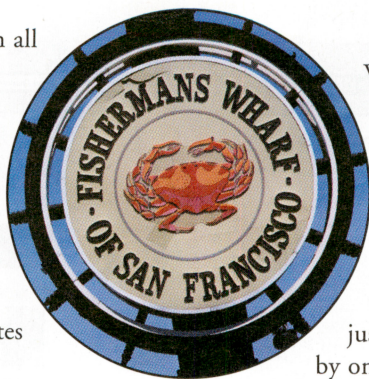
In general, a more expensive digital camera offers a high-resolution megapixel CCD, or Charged Coupled Device, an image sensor measured in pixels. Consumer digital cameras come with 1, 2, or 3 megapixel CCDs, meaning 1 million, 2 million, or 3 million pixels with some variations. The more pixels, the more image detail captured, and the better the image quality.

figure out which ones won't go out of business. Despite the inherent financial volatility of such sites, the ones included in *MacHome's* August 2000 NetLife

roundup found them all up and running.

Photo sharing Websites are an instant way to get your photos online. Just upload your images to the photo-sharing site of your choice. Many sites also let you edit your images online, send greeting cards, order reprints and gifts, and other fun things. They can be addictive!

We tried Shutterfly (www.shutterfly.com), a site that lets you instantly share your pictures, create cards, add decorative borders and frames, and otherwise spruce up your images for online viewing. Anyone who sees your album can order reprints.



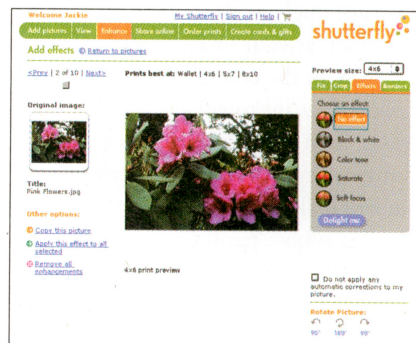
Like many photo sharing Websites, Shutterfly has a free downloadable utility that makes it easy to organize and post multiple images at the same time. You don't need the utility to add photos to your album; you can just upload each image one by one using your browser.

Major Web portals also provide instant photo sharing options. Lycos Photo Center (<http://photos.lycos.com/Photocenter>) lets you create online photo albums for free. A simple interface lets you upload up to 10 photos at once. You can add captions, or view thumbnails or full-size images. Yahoo, (www.yahoo.com), Excite (www.excite.com), and others feature similar options.

downloading, and ordering prints and gifts such as printing your image on a mug, mouse pad, or T-shirt.

Your Own Site

Okay, maybe you're not so thrilled with the generic layouts, limited backgrounds, choices of colors, and the creativity constraints of photo-sharing



Websites. You want something gorgeous.

If you are ambitious and want to create a Website *from scratch*, you'll need Web server space, which you may already get for free from your ISP. You can also use a Web hosting service such as GeoCities (<http://geocities.yahoo.com/home>) and Angelfire (<http://angelfire.lycos.com>).

Creating a Website from scratch can be expensive and time consuming because it involves purchasing a Web authoring program. Popular ones such as Adobe GoLive 5, Macromedia Dreamweaver 4, and SoftPress Systems Freeway 3 run from \$250 to \$300, and have a considerable learning curve.

With less time and effort, you can try Netscape Composer, which comes as a free download with the Netscape Web browser. You can even create a Web page in Microsoft Word or AppleWorks: Just export the document as an HTML file using the Save As Web Page or Save as HTML command.

The Right Touch

Just as photographs and slides can take you back to the great time you had on your summer vacation, a Website gives you — and your loved ones — a way to revisit the best parts of your trip and relive them all over again whenever you want. **MHJ**

Your iTools Video

Now you want to get fancy. Still photos just aren't cutting it. And besides, you just got the new camcorder and are dying to shoot digital videos of your trip and put them on the Web. We understand and are happy to report that posting your video on iTools is as easy as posting your still photographs.

Just do the following: After you shoot your digital video, you may want to edit it in iMovie 2 (which you can download for \$49 from Apple's

Website, if you don't already have it).

When you're done with editing, just drag and drop your movie file into the folder called Movie inside your iDisk folder. Select a template

from the iTools Website and your iMovie is immediately available for viewing and linked to any other Web pages you may have on iTools.



Ticket to Ride

Now that your list of ideas matches your sunscreen's SPF, choose a vacation and book it.

By Carolyn Blackburn

At **www.cheaptickets.com** you're likely to find some of the best

darn deals on the Internet. Rated America's #1 airfare discounter by Frommer's Budget Travel in 2000, sign up for free and scour the site for flight, rental car, and hotel options.



Another place to visit to make travel arrangements is **www.expedia.com**. Find package deals from your departure city — snorkel in Cancun, relax in Maui — and advice columns, such as how to save on business fares and how to overcome jet lag. Also, sign up at **www.smarterliving.com** to receive weekly email newsletters detailing last minute travel deals. This isn't spam, folks. Membership means special discounts on airfare, hotel reservations, and car rentals.

World Wide Travel Agent

There might be as many travel resources on the Internet as there are tangible destinations for you to visit this year. Though they don't quite compare to new experiences in a foreign place, the following sites will prove invaluable during the planning stage.

Holiday, Celebration

If you can't find the exit to get out of town, get online for directions. Travel Websites are brimming with ideas for eager travelers.

Perhaps you'd like to take a Civil War cruise. Check out **www.historytraveler.com** for American history tour ideas. Search by U.S. region to discover historic events and landmarks particular to each state. At **www.iexplore.com**, which is hosted by *National Geographic*, search by country, interests, and activities — Spain, rainforests, bicycling, scuba diving — for a personalized expedition.

At **www.travel.discovery.com**, a visually pleasing site, you can explore virtual tours and find tips for trip planning, including maps and currency converters. Hosted by the Travel Channel, the site also has forums offering great advice from fellow travelers, and a Webcam that lets you peek at landmarks, such as Times

Square and Big Ben. Travel tools at **www.mytravelguide.com** include driving directions, a doctor finder, and rail pass information. This site also has travelogues — travel journals submitted by members — about trips to San Francisco and Egypt, among others.

For more travel ideas, go to **http://away.com**.

This site has a trip finder that assists in your trip selection, including weekend getaway ideas and national park suggestions. It also has Your Daily Escape, a "postcard" listing specifics about a probable destination, such as Costa Rica. Yahoo! Travel, at **http://travel.yahoo.com** lets you explore desired destinations and activities, and also has listings for Lifestyle travel, including business, family, and seniors. At Yahoo! Travel you can search flight, car, and hotel options as well.



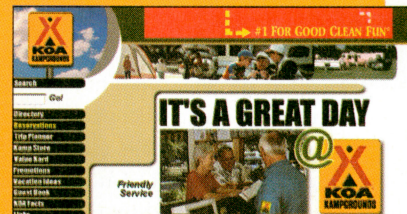
Happy Camper

So where will you rest your weary eyes after long days of sightseeing? Find a pillow to lay your head on at **www.hotelguide.com**. Here you will find lodging prices, reviews, and pictures — from Bauza in Madrid to Anna in Prague. The site also has a handy currency converter and a special map maker displaying locations of interest near the hotel you choose.

Perhaps some of you are on a shoestring budget, or you just prefer roughing it. At

www.koa.com and **www.gocamping**

america.com, you'll find a place to pitch your tent. Each site offers travel tips, campground information, and tidbits about wilderness adventure. Be sure to read Bookmarks (page 74) this month, which offers more information about national parks in these glorious United States.



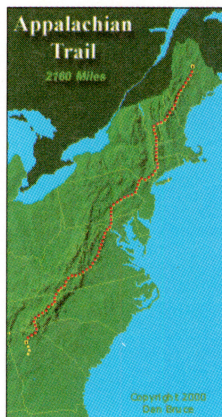
Hittin' the Trail

With spring in the air and summer around the corner, we tend to get lost while contemplating the great outdoors. We dream about all the fun we could have if only we were out there — you know — hiking, camping, canoeing, swimming, driving, and otherwise trekking through the national parks, and perhaps other, more untamed locales. Whether you're an avid hiker or just a tenderfoot city person like us, the Web now puts much of the natural world at your fingertips and helps you better prepare for real world sojourns.

The Appalachian Trail — AT for those in the know — is a wilderness spanning northern Georgia through Central Maine (encompassing fourteen states, eight national forests,

and six national parks) that can only be traversed by foot. But you can find out just what you'd be getting into by clicking on Trailplace.com (www.trailplace.com) an interactive Website for Appalachian Trail Thru-hikers. What's a thru-hiker, you might ask? They are the

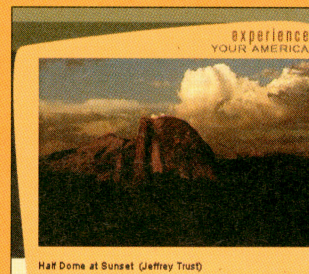
daring souls who hike the trail from start to finish — all 2,160 miles of it, or most of it anyway. This site, published by the Center for Appalachian Trail Studies, is mostly text-based with just a few scattered images, but its strongest feature is the Class of 2000 Thru-Hiker Journals, which share the real-world experiences of those hiking the ol' AT. The Website also features a mailing list and planning forum to get you started on your trip.



National Park Journeys

Ever wondered about vacations at U.S. national parks? Check out ParkNet (www.nps.gov), the Website of the National Park Service. Four main links — Links to the Past, NatureNet, Park Smart, and InfoZone — lead you to separate and elaborate Websites. We especially enjoyed the Web cams on NatureNet. For those with an open mind about their destination, click Visit Your Parks, where a drop-down menu connects you to every park link, complete with its own separate information page. Get details about traveling, camping, lodging, activities, fees and permits, and way more.

Are you California dreaming? Well, the first national park to ponder may just be the one made famous by photographer Ansel Adams: Yosemite National Park (www.nps.gov/yose). The Park Service maintains a Website full of links that give you all the information you need about Yosemite. We were disappointed at the design austerity of this site, and its paucity of images (until you really look for them). For instant image gratification, go to the trail descriptions from the home page's Wilderness link (www.nps.gov/yose/wilderness/traildescriptions.htm). The In Depth portion of the Yosemite site is a rich resource of information about road conditions, weather, maps, and news.



Yo, hikers! Don't miss the Website of the American Hiking Society (www.americanhiking.org), a national organization for hikers that seeks to protect the nation's hiking trails. This attractive site features links such as Trail Conservation & Policy, Events & Volunteer Opportunities, News & Resources, and Hiker's Emporium. These supply a wealth of information on everything from Congressional land policy to hiking gear. Visitors are encouraged to write to their local representatives and volunteer to restore federal hiking trails.

Behold the Wildflowers

You don't have to be a large organization — or any organization at all — to post a wilderness Website. We were captivated by the range of fabulous photographs and the wealth of information contained on Hiking Trails and Wildflowers by Keith and Barbro McCree (www.efn.org/~k_mccree), hiking enthusiasts from Oregon. If you're interested in Oregon trails and wildflowers (We can never resist wildflowers!), this site has plenty to ponder. We were especially enthralled with the wildflower photo gallery and the impressive amount of information about each flower. Check out the maps and spectacular landscape images of the authors' favorite trails. A trail list rates more than 100 trails, all based on the authors' personal experience.

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MacHome

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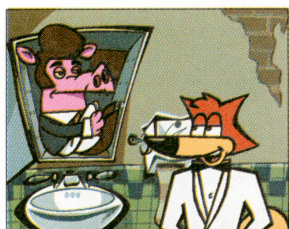


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Foxy and Fishy Fun



Due out this month from

Humongous is *SPY Fox: Operation Ozone*. This CD-ROM is the third *SPY Fox* adventure for

kids, ages 5 to 10, and will cost \$25. If your kids

have enthusiastically played one of these titles, they'll be excited to reacquaint themselves with SPY Fox, the sharp-dressed, gadget-toting agent. In *Operation Ozone*, your kids must help SPY Fox save the earth from an aerosol can blasting a potent stream of hairspray at the ozone layer. The culprit in *Operation Ozone* is Poodles Galore, the Queen of Cosmetics — she must be stopped before the world has no choice but to buy heaps of her SPF 2001 sunblock, the only sunblock on the market strong enough to repel the damaging rays of the sun. Kids are challenged to think logically through a series of top-secret missions. Leave it to Humongous to present a rollicking good time wrapped in environmental awareness.



Another Humongous title, *Freddi Fish and the Case of the Creature of Coral Cove*, is due in June for \$20. The game invites 3 to 8 year-olds to help Freddi and her sidekick

Luther investigate a mysterious sea monster. The sighting of the sea monster has put the brakes on the opening of Coral Cove Park. Players must use deductive reasoning to solve puzzles in order to get to the bottom of this underwater caper.

www.humongous.com, 800-499-8386

Mama Mia

By Carolyn Blackburn

Kutoka Interactive recently announced two, count 'em, two, new *Mia* titles,

due out by the end of this year.

The skateboarding mouse returns in *Mia: Just in Time* and *Click & Create with Mia*. *Just in Time* presents basic math activities within a time travel adventure for 6 to 10 year-olds. *Click & Create*, Kuto-



ka's first creativity title,

provides kids with five activity centers where they'll get to practice skills such as drawing, painting, and designing greeting cards. Each title is expected to cost \$20.

www.kutoka.com,
514-849-4800

Tell Us What You Think!

MacHome likes to hear from our readers. Take a few minutes to let us know what you think of this issue, as well as what you'd like to read about in the future. Don't forget to mention the titles you'd like to see reviewed.

Visit us at www.machome.com/mayfeedback.

Treasure Chest

A Website that specializes in Mac software and hardware is a Website worth visiting. At MacTreasures

you can find many titles that aren't available on retail shelves, such as the recently

added *My Work* series, designed to encourage exploration and curiosity in kids, ages 2 to 8. The series of nine games (from \$10 - \$30 each) is divided into distinct levels of difficulty so replay value is high. MacTreasures's Educational Site currently lists over 5,000 titles for students and teachers of all age levels and grades, plus bilingual, special education, and teaching tools.

The site also hosts a Macintosh computer donation placement program for folks looking to donate their computers to schools and non-profits. And check out *Oldies But Goodies*, where you might find a discontinued gem. www.mactreasures.com



Break the Language Barrier

The Rosetta Stone vs. Transparent Language

Travel is an adventure, one that most of us embrace and long for. But adventures are often challenging, particularly when you visit a place where they don't speak your native tongue. Sure, waiting for your passport to arrive in the mail and booking accommodations can be frustrating, but when you get there and find it difficult to ask for directions or read a menu, the real hair pulling begins.

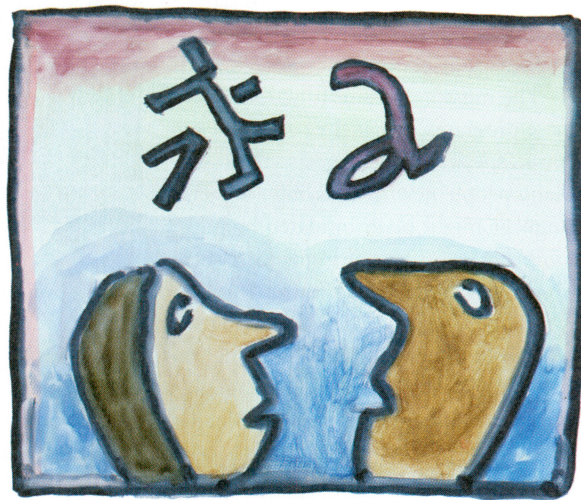
So when in Rome, why not do a little of what the Romans do? The Rosetta Stone and Transparent Language — two wonderful language learning titles — are available to give you a solid foundation before you catch your flight.

By Carolyn Blackburn

Each company has titles for various languages and levels, but for the sake of comparison, I looked at two beginner level Italian titles — The Rosetta Stone: Italian Level 1 and Transparent Language: Italian Now. If you still have a couple of months before departure, either of these titles should teach you survival phrases before you get there.

Each title hosts hours of interactive instruction. As in any good language classroom, both titles encourage listening, reading, speaking, and writing on the road to grasping a new vernacular. Both are wonderful, but to choose one, decide how you will best learn. Rosetta feels like a concentrated visit to Florence, and Transparent feels like a free-floating tour of Italy's countryside. During eight units of lessons with 11 to 12 activities in each, Rosetta's approach is systematic and guided. It steadily immerses its users in consistent yet increasingly challenging exercises. Where Rosetta might be considered strict, Transparent is lenient. It offers guidelines for two types of learning — the Immersion Approach and the Step-By-Step Approach — with English translations throughout.

Rosetta's workbook, which corresponds with each lesson on the title, reads like a Rossini libretto without translations, giving immediate insight to the CD-ROM before installation.



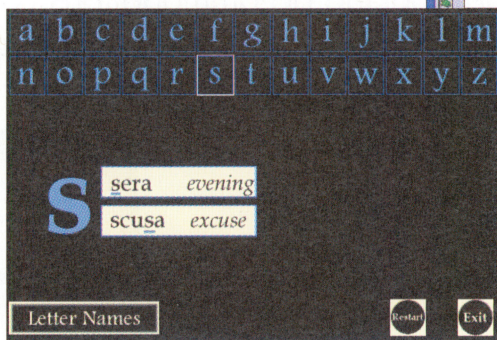
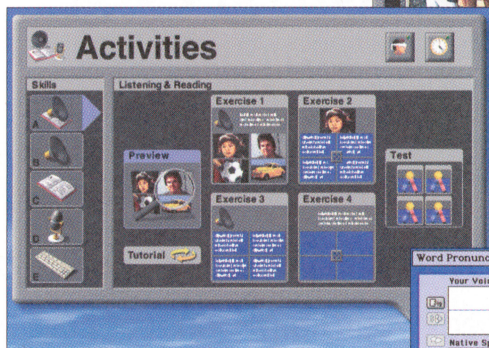
Aside from navigation prompts and the help function, which offers English assistance, the title is truly immersive: all Italian, all the time. The interface is crisp and easy to traverse with five main sections for each lesson: Listening and Reading, Listening, Reading, Speaking, and Writing. When practiced together, these activities ensure reinforcement that will enhance your opportunity to learn and remember. The main screen for each lesson remains the same, as does the quiz method. During the Reading activities, for example, you're asked to match a phrase — "un bambino e un cane" — to one of four pictures that corresponds with it (in this case, the picture of a young boy with a dog). When you choose correctly, the screen shifts to the next phrase.

As a beginner, it feels exciting to be swept right into the action with simple phrases, such as “un uomo” (a man) and “un aereo” (an airplane). But when genders start changing — “bambino” to “bambina” to “bambine” (variations of child) — I wish Rosetta offered explanations. Transparent does. Its interface is busy and takes time and patience to navigate, but if you’re interested in comparing English translations and grammar fundamentals with the Italian you’re learning, it’s well worth your time. Begin with the Italian Alphabet screen, which introduces you to sounds of the language as well as common words, then jump into one of four sections, including Fundamental Phrases and Survival Phrases. The majority of Transparent lessons are presented as interactive dialogues. The title also hosts vocabulary and grammar games, as well as heaps of help options and tips — including the idea that success in learning a new language comes with frequent (even daily) practice for short intervals, rather than an hours-long session once a week.

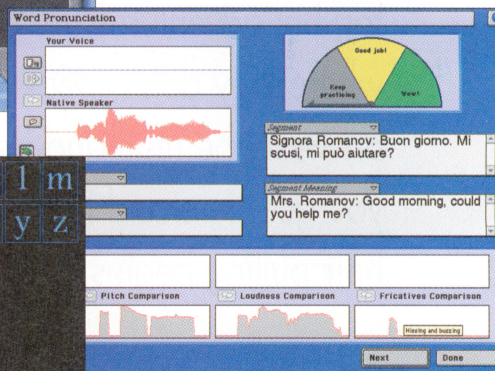
The most important function of these programs is that they encourage you to speak the language as you learn. Many people new to studying a foreign language might be intimidated by pursuing a class for fear of butchering the words in front of a roomful of people. Ahh, the wonder of home schooling — yap away without bothering anyone. Each title allows you to record your voice (Transparent comes with a small microphone) and compare it to those of Italian speaking folks, with graphical feedback. Check for proper pronunciation and intonation, and practice your skills before moving on. Rosetta’s Speaking section accompanies each activity and gauges how close you sound to a native Italian. Transparent offers interactive video conversations, which allow you to choose a role — either a person buying a drink or a foodstand clerk, for example — record your voice speaking the appropriate lines, then replay the conversation.

Both titles dismiss the tedium of conventional textbook methods, but

Transparent tips the scale of fun a bit more than Rosetta. Rosetta’s method is tried and true — the title has received many awards from critics and educators. If you’re after a title that specifically dictates your learning, Rosetta is for you. But if you’re a less pas-



The Rosetta Stone: Italian Level 1 (above and left) and Transparent Language: Italian Now! (below) each offer interactive desktop language instruction.



choice is yours. Because we all learn differently, it’s difficult to judge which title will provide a higher comprehension and success rate. **MHJ**

sive, more curious student, Transparent allows you to learn as you explore. Use its many features as you deem them necessary, including word and grammar tools, puzzles, bookmarks to memorize your favorite sections, and a notepad for personal comments.

Rosetta teaches many languages, including those that might not be widely available, such as Polish and Thai, but the price is steep. Transparent costs less and offers similar beginner fundamentals — both programs introduce students to past, present, and future verb tenses; descriptive adjectives; and comparative nouns, among others.

Of course, the

The Rosetta Stone: Italian Level 1

★★★★
Fairfield Technologies
\$195
800-788-0822
www.trstone.com

Transparent Language: Italian Now!

★★★★★
\$50
888-245-1829
www.transparent.com

Check it Out...

Need a quick translation? Go to www.free.translation.com for text and Web page translations. The service, hosted by Transparent Language, is free.

UltraKey 4

Though not proud of it, I was a pro “hunt and peck” typist for a long time. I truly treated the keyboard pitifully, punching it and putting pressure on it to reach the I and C keys. But after a couple of hours with *UltraKey 4*, a program I wish I had the pleasure of learning from years ago, there is hope on the horizon. I looked at the keys far less than usual while typing this review, for example (not to mention my speed and impeccable finger positioning).

The beauty of *UltraKey 4* is that it acts as a caring teacher who logically and patiently takes you through a progression of three levels of exercises that will result, with practice, in your becoming a fluid typist. At the onset, you're shown body mechanics — feet flat on the floor, wrists parallel with the desk — and

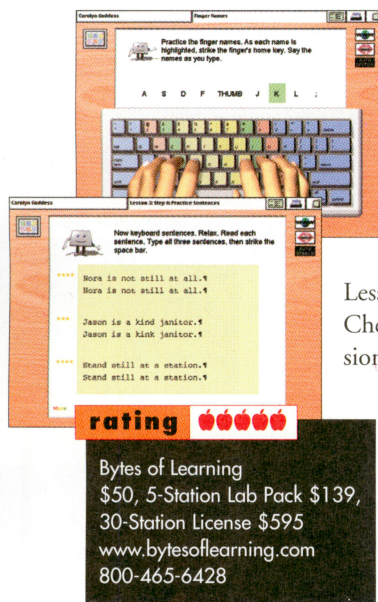
told the importance of frequently stretching and averting your eyes from the screen.

And then on to the Lessons and Skill Check practice sessions. In Lessons, your fingers are put through their paces — learn the keys, starting with home row, until you've learned the

whole keyboard. After each lesson — featuring letters, such as “H E P” — the Skill Check area allows you to test yourself for accuracy and speed with sentences focusing on those letters. The urge to rewrite silly sentences — “It is not pleasant to slip off steps in front of people” — will fade when you realize they're helping you achieve your goal. A chart that measures your progress pops up after each quiz.

UltraKey 4 is available for individual or classroom use. With a wide variety of testing materials and its game-like feel — it becomes increasingly fun as you challenge yourself to type your best — you'll up your words-per-minute in no time.

— Carolyn Blackburn



Bytes of Learning
\$50, 5-Station Lab Pack \$139,
30-Station License \$595
www.bytesoflearning.com
800-465-6428

Monopoly Casino

Monopoly Casino turns a gambling den into family entertainment. Fake money, Monopoly tokens, and slick animations make this a good-looking game. The graphics, busy with bright machines and flashing lights, reminded me of real casinos. Yet *Monopoly Casino* is a lonely, listless game — all those machines, and no people or storyline in sight. A diehard gambler will enjoy this game, but people with only a mild interest might pick it up for a minute or two, then move on.

The soundtrack is bouncy jazz with a Latin influence that played well with the click-clack of rolling dice and spinning slot machines, but it needed some background crowd noise to liven up the ambience.

Choosing a game is tough — maybe if I gambled more I'd know the rules for 20 varieties of keno or poker. Even though the manual helps, I'd prefer the quick convenience of an in-game guide.

Monopoly Casino sports an easy point-and-click interface, although getting a multiplayer game going proved tricky thanks to randomly dropped connections. Single-player mode could use a storyline to inspire the action rather than letting you wander around the casino floor, but the game is subversively amusing — cop and income tax icons don't pay off on the slots.

Mr. Monopoly is everywhere — he's a dealer, he runs off with the money when you quit the game, and if you go broke, it's Mr. Monopoly walking sadly into the elevator and flashing his empty pockets. Bottom line, *Monopoly Casino* isn't as much fun as a trip to Vegas, but it's cheaper.

— Sandy Brundage



MacSoft
\$30
www.wizworks.com/macsoft
800-229-2714

Adiboo: Discover Nature, Animals & Planets

Generally when kids visit amusement parks, their feet can hardly keep up with the pace of their fluttering hearts and racing minds. Similar feelings will surface once you install *Adiboo: Discover Nature, Animals & Planets* for the young one in your life. There is so much going on in this game that it receives immediate kudos for its replay value. Throughout this 2-CD title, kids will hone their critical thinking skills by identifying planets, getting acquainted with different cultures, and exploring animal life, among a bunch of other activities.

On the first CD, kids are introduced to Adiboo, an exuberant elf-like character, and his surroundings. His yard and clubhouse are colorful and interactive. Kids will love the reactions when they start clicking on characters and items onscreen — Adiboo kicks a ball, the TV displays mini cartoon adventures, the radio spouts a news update



rating ★★★★★

Knowledge Adventure
\$20
Ages 4 to 6
www.knowledgeadventure.com
800-542-4240

that the garden is ready for harvesting. Real life skills are put to the test, as kids must go back to water flowers in bloom and harvest ripe produce. Parents will appreciate the interconnected nature of some of these activities — stock the fridge with grown veggies, for example, and kids can play the recipe game.

There are even more games on the second CD. Kids can explore scenes in history with a family tree game, seasonal changes on the farm, and the solar system in outer space.

Though each activity sports three levels of difficulty to appropriately cater to the suggested age range, some games will prove too difficult for four-year-olds. One such game is Fun With Floor Plans — rather than deduct the correct answers logically, I suspect some kids will play the guessing game.

This title is chock full of encouragement — animations and songs accompany success — and fun, which equals hours of playing and learning.

— Carolyn Blackburn

Kidspiration

What you see is what you learn with *Kidspiration*, a visual learning tool that uses symbols and diagrams to inspire students (and teachers) in grades K through 3. Don't think this is too simple for older kids, though; I found it useful in writing this review because it's great for organizing thoughts before starting a big project.

You can arrange symbols and draw links between related items in Picture view, or switch to Writing view for text-only brainstorming. Can't make up your mind? Swap between the two using the Pictures-to-Text translation.

Over 45 activities in reading, social studies,

and science are included for teachers to use in the classroom. I particularly liked the science outline, which helps

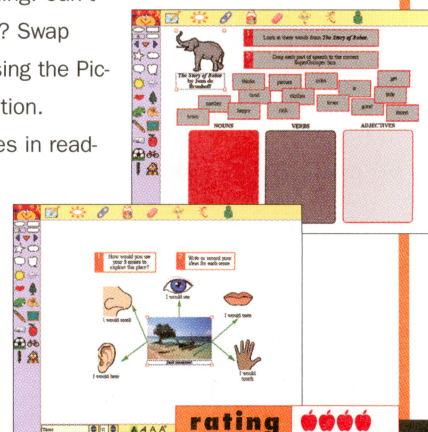
students plan the steps of an experiment by asking them to identify what they're trying to figure out at each step. Also, the grammar exercise that uses a *Babar* story to group parts of speech is great.

There's plenty of room for freeform expression, too. With a large library of bright, attractive symbols to represent everything from concrete items to abstract thoughts, this is a flexible, powerful tool for young and old alike. Teachers can also create new symbols and even toss in URLs to expand the program in step with the classroom's educational growth.

The Audio settings let a child hear text out loud or record his own voice while reading. The selection of synthetic voices is strange, with choices like "deranged," "cellos," and "aliens." But quirks aside, *Kidspiration* works well as a reading aid.

Overall, its flexibility, creativity, and utility make *Kidspiration* a tool you'll want on your child's bookshelf, and maybe even your own.

— Sandy Brundage



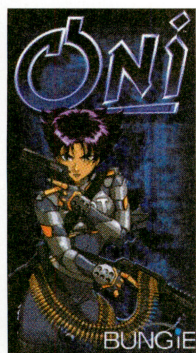
rating ★★★★★

Inspiration Software, Inc.
\$69
Grades K through 3
www.inspiration.com
800-877-4292

Cheat Sheet

Have you played through *Oni* yet? If you've finished the game, you can use the following cheats, straight from our pals at Gathering of Developers. If you press F1, these cheats can be used by typing the words listed:

"liveforever" - Invincibility
 "winlevel" - Instantly Win Level
 "loselevel" - Instantly Lose Level
 "minime" - Mini Mode



"canttouchthis" -

Unstoppable

"elderrune" -

Regeneration

"fatloot" - Fat

Loot

"bighead" - Big

Head

"munitionfrenzy"

- Weapons Locker

"superammo" -

Super Ammo

Mode

"reservoirdogs" - Last Man

Standing

"roughjustice" - Gatling Guns

"chenille" - Daodan Power

"behemoth" - Godzilla Mode

"glassworld" - Glass Furniture

"moonshadow" - Phase Cloak

"fistsoflegend" - Fists of Legend

"shapeshifter" - Change Characters

"killmequick" - Ultra Mode

"carousel" - Slow Motion

"touchofdeath" - Omnipotence

(Not to taunt you, but the folks at G.O.D. also wanted you to know that there are two endings to *Oni*. Something you do near the end of the game dictates the ending and degree of difficulty. We can't tell you what the event is, but thought we'd tempt you.)

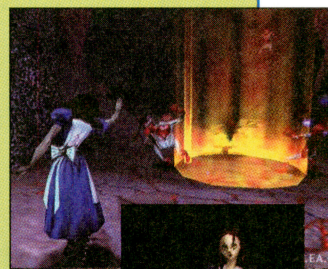
www.godgames.com, 877-463-4263

By Carolyn Blackburn

Wonder Land

Aspyr Media recently announced that it will collaborate with Electronic Arts once again and publish American McGee's *Alice*. Westlake will do the conversion of this third-per-

son 3D action adventure game. If you love Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland*, wait until you get a look at *Alice*. It provides a dark perspective to the classic story, with gorgeous graphics and looming pervers-



ty. Charac-

ters and locations of the

classic stories — levels

reminiscent of the Cater-

pillar's Garden and the Mad Hatter's

Tea Party, among others — remain

intact. But life is not as she left it when

Alice returns to Wonderland. Your task

during this game, which could be

considered the third story in the *Alice*

book series, after *Through the Looking*

Glass, is to turn the evil around. You

play *Alice*, fighting her way through

evil Card Guards, Fire Imps, and the

wicked Queen of Hearts with no more

than bravery and naughty Wonder-

land "toys." With toys sharp as knives,

this one gets an "M" rating, for mature audiences only.

www.aspyr.com, www.alice.ea.com, 888-212-7797

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MacHome likes to hear from our readers.

Take a few minutes to let us know what

you think of this issue, as well as what

you'd like to read about in the future.

Don't forget to mention the games you'd

like to see reviewed, and which you'd like

to see in the spotlight of our monthly

Cheat Sheet.

Visit us at www.machome.com/

mayfeedback

Multiplayer Madness

The fellas at Freeverse have something up their sleeves.

Arcane Arena, in the making for two and a half years, is on its

way. This Mac-only game will be available to play online by this

summer (hopefully!) and will have role-playing game-type

quests. Ian Lynch Smith, president of Freeverse, gave us a sneak

peek of *Arcane Arena* at the Macworld Expo in San Francisco in

January, and so far, so good — it looks like a gem worth waiting

for. Sign up with the Freeverse news list if you're interested in

beta testing *Arcane Arena*. While you wait, try one of the updat-

ed Freeverse card games, such as *Bridge 3D Deluxe*.

www.freeverse.com

What a Character

How to Transport Yourself (or Anyone Else) to Sims Land

Last month, we looked at how mods make a game last longer by adding levels and skins. Now we're going to walk you through creating a Sims mod that looks just like you.

Getting Under the Skin

First, download SimShow (www.aspyr.com), a utility that lets you preview your new Sim before importing it into the game. SimShow also comes loaded with prefabricated skins, which means that instead of having to build a skin from the ground up, you'll be able to make new skins just by tweaking old ones.

Next, let's talk about file names. A typical Sims file looks like **B007FAFitdrk_Deb**. The first letter is **B**, for Body, or **C**, for Cranium. The three numbers after that specify the type of clothes the model wears. For example:

- 001**—shorts and short sleeve shirt,
- 003**—pants and a long sleeve top,
- 007**—formal attire.



By Sandy Brundage

There are many other clothing types; take a few minutes to browse through SimShow's models to see all the fashion choices.

After that, you'll see **MA** (Male Adult), **FA** (Female Adult), or **UC** (Child). Hang in there; there are just a few more designations to learn: **Fit**—a trim model, **Fat**—an overweight model, **Skn**—a skinny model, **Chd**—a child model. Skin tones are next: **drk**—dark skin, **med**—medium skin, **lgt**—fair skin.

Finally, you'll see a **_** followed by a unique tag. When you create a new Sims file, everything before the **_** must adhere to the above guidelines. But add whatever you want after the **_** (as long as the entire filename doesn't exceed the Mac's 31 character limit.)

Quiz time: What does **B001MAFitdrk_relax** look like? Answer: A male in short sleeves and shorts, with dark skin and a fit build.

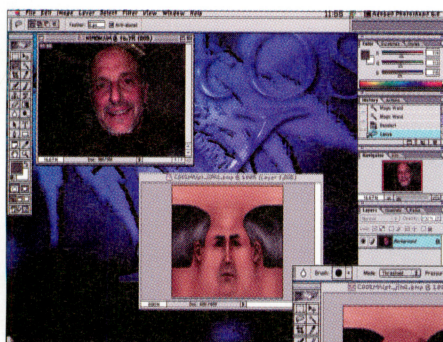
Now it's time to browse SimShow and pick out a likely target. When you find a model to fit under your face and

clothes, write down the file names displayed under Body Textures and Head Textures.

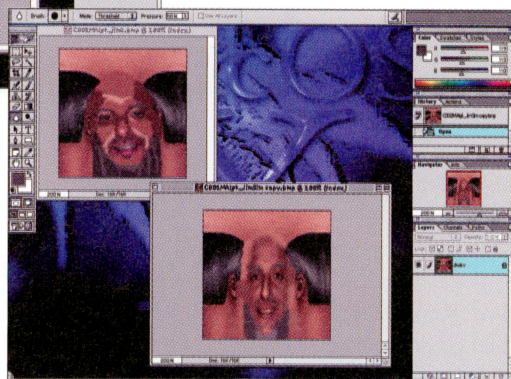
Plastic Surgery

Using an image editor that supports layers and **.bmp** files, like Adobe Photoshop, open the Head Texture files you picked out. Immediately save them in a new folder with different names, so you don't overwrite the original files from SimShow. Also important: Change the mode of the image from **Indexed** to **RGB**. You must edit in **RGB** mode, otherwise the finished skin won't load into SimShow.

Now open a digital photo of your face. From the Layer menu, create a new layer on the Sim head image. Now use the image editor's select tool to outline and copy your face over to the new layer. To make the old face work with the new one, play with tools that transform



Putty In Your Hands Don't be afraid to experiment — here we're using Photoshop's Distort command to stretch the new face over the old one like a mask.



objects. In Photoshop, the new layer's Opacity setting can make your face almost transparent, making it easy to line up your nose and eyes over the Sim's. Then use a tool like Transform to stretch your face until it's the same size as the Sim face. Once everything is in place, use the Merge Layers tool.

Making a new face look good requires practice, but thankfully, no surgical skill. Use the Sample and Blend tools to match skin tones and hair. Don't worry about messing up; it's easy to start over since you haven't changed the original SimShow file.

When you're ready to save, follow *The Sims* naming conventions we talked about earlier so the program will recognize the new model. Keep everything before the _ the same, then add your name after the _. Also, change the mode back to Indexed (256) colors and save in .bmp format so SimShow will be able to load the model. Put the new file in SimShow's GameData\Textures folder.

Emperor's Clothes

To create a fresh set of clothes, open the Body Texture file you

picked out, saving it immediately in a new location with a different name so the original file is safe. Don't worry about merging pictures this time; just make a new layer for each piece of clothing you want to change. To add a logo, like the Apple on your favorite T-shirt, reverse it. You'll have to place it on the layer backwards for it to look right when the SimShow models the new shirt.

Now Playing ... You!

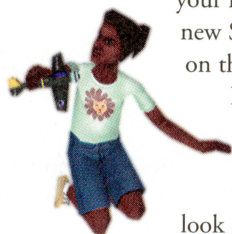
Start SimShow again. Select the skin tone, sex, and build that match your model. Now your new Sim should show up on the choices under Head Textures and Body Textures. If you can't find it,

take a

look at our

SimShow S.O.S.

sidebar to figure out what went wrong. Now walk your model down the SimShow runway! If you're satisfied, import the new you to *The Sims* by copying the file to *The Sims*' GameData\Skins folder. **MHJ**



More Mod Making

Many games in addition to *The Sims* let you add customized levels, characters, and even stories. Is it any coincidence that classics are supplied with level-editing tools and are followed by gamers who are devoted to expanding these stories? Total conversions are the great homage to these games, where an entirely new experience is created based on the original title.

Myth II was an overnight community sensation, with most of the *Myth* players signing on immediately. Numerous conversions are still created for *Myth II*.

The Tools: Fear and Loathing.

What They Do: Fear edits and creates new characters, sounds, and other game elements. Loathing creates and edits 3D landscapes.

Where to Get Them: Included with *Myth II*.

The Total Conversions: Chimera, World War II: Recon, Bushido.

What's notable: Chimera was a free expansion released by Bungie, and the other two are expansive games with new units and vehicles from World War II and feudal Japan, respectively.

Where to Get Them: www.bungie.net, www.clanplaid.net/misc/recon, www.creationgames.com, respectively, or together at www.bungie.net/downloads/conversions.shtml.

— Zack Stern

SimShow S.O.S.

If your new model looks like a grey or pink blob in the SimShow, start over and follow these four tips:

1. Edit the file in RGB mode.
2. Save the file in Indexed mode, with 256 colors and .bmp format.
3. Name the new file by *The Sims* naming conventions.
4. In SimShow, select the right body type, sex, and skin tone for your model.

Monster Hunter

Most of *Monster Hunter* is just plain fun. There's enough quirk to appeal to any player. The gameplay is also attractive because it's inherently simple. However, *Monster Hunter* is best used as a diversion; in spite of its positive aspects, it can quickly become repetitive.

Monster Hunter is played in flat mazes riddled with enemies from classic monster stories. Liberally borrowed from pop-culture as well as folklore, you'll face vampires and carnivorous plants, among others. To defeat them, you'll need to use a corresponding

weapon, such as a flashlight for the gremlins. Knock over the enemy, then go destroy its spawning point. Repeat this process until the level is monster-free. The biggest catch is that each weapon only works with its corresponding enemy; weed killer won't

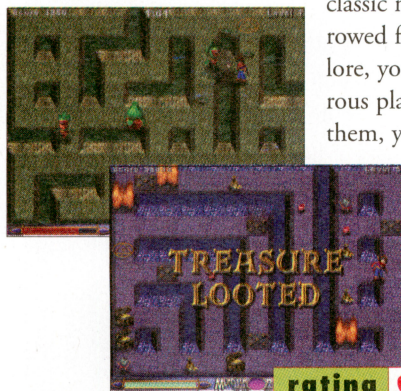
keep a ghost at bay.

Moving through these overhead mazes and planning your route based on the patterns of enemies is a smooth, arcade-like experience. It doesn't flow as well as a classic like *Pac-Man*, but *Monster Hunter* approaches this Zen-state.

The humor and absurdity of this game is its biggest hook. Your character sports an eyepatch for seemingly no other reason than it looks good on him. Throw salt at a plant, and watch it pause to eat the treat. If you spend too long in a maze, a gloriously excessive snake moves through the level at an alarming rate.

This game lacks variety, but it's a fun, quick activity that has no learning curve.

— Zack Stern



rating **4.0**

Monkey Byte Development
\$20
www.mbyte.com
800-522-3774

Cheat Sheet

Use these tricks to have some fun and get some help.

GABBAGABBAHEY Immediately gives two more lives.

KEYSPLEASE Automatically get the Treasure Room keys.

KILLEMALL Obliterates all Monsters and Spawners on the level.

IAMALOSER Makes the Hunter invincible until he destroys a monster spawner.

SHOWINFO Before each level, icons will display showing the active special effects.

IDKFA Automatically get the Revolver.

SPAWNKUKU Spawn the Mighty KooKachooloo.

ACTIONJACKSON Turn on Turbo Mode.

BURGER Whatever you do, don't type this!

Cheat Sheet

If you're a slave to *Diablo II*, read on for some goodies from Blizzard.

Transmuting Formulae

Listed below are recipes for the Horadric Cube. Simply place the items in the first half of the equation into the Cube and hit the Transmute button to produce the item in the second half of the equation.



1 Axe + 2 Daggers = Throwing Axe. Any class/type of axe can be used (i.e., magic/socketed/non magical axe, etc). A random quantity of throwing axes is produced.

4 Health Potions (of any type) + 1 Ruby (any type) + Magical/Set/Rare Sword (any type) = Long Sword of the Leech. You can use this formula to get a life-stealing long sword.

1 Ring + 1 Emerald (any grade) + 4 Anti-dote Potions = 1 Viridian Ring. Use this formula to create a poison resistance ring.

3 Amulets = 1 Random Ring. Save any unwanted amulets for the chance of getting a high quality ring.

3 Health Potions + 3 Mana Potions = 1 Rejuvenation Potion. Use this formula if you are in need of instant healing and/or mana.

3 Gems of the Same Type and Grade (lower than Perfect) = 1 Higher Grade Gem of the Same Type. Use this formula to upgrade your growing masses of low quality gems into something more useful.

6 Perfect Gems (1 of each type) + 1 Amulet (any quality) = Prismatic Amulet. Use this formula to create an amulet with resistance to all.

2 Quivers of Bolts = 1 Quiver of Arrows. This is for users of bows that are in need of ammunition. A random quantity of arrows is produced.

2 Quivers of Arrows = 1 Quiver of Bolts. This is for users of crossbows that are in need of ammunition. A random quantity of bolts is produced.
www.blizzard.com

You Don't Know Jack 2001

You might never sit in a contestant chair on "Jeopardy" or "Who Wants To Be A Millionaire," but if such an endeavor is on your to-do list and trivia's your game (oh, and if you're not easily offended), check out *You Don't Know Jack 2001*. One half of the 2001 set is *Louder! Faster! Funnier!*, a title that sums up why people who've played *You Don't Know Jack* generally get such a kick out of it. Complete with a silly host and an emphasis on *Faster!*, it provides an authentic quiz show experience.

These games — *Offline* is the second CD in the set — put you in the hot seat. The CDs are similar; both allow for one to

three person play, and each hosts tons of questions for hours of gameplay. I had as much fun playing alone as I had playing with fellow MacHomies. During multi-player play, each person is assigned a letter on the key-

board to "buzz" when they know the answer. This works well with all involved, but in order to Screw your opponent — if you have a feeling they

won't guess the correct answer, force them to try — you must hit your assigned letter

and then the S key. My opponent's hand was over the S key — his "buzzer" was the letter Q — which made it difficult to sock it to him.

The questions call on your knowledge of history, science, and pop culture, among others. Aside from the straightforward multiple choice format, *Jack* throws in several special categories, including Wendithap'n and Dis or Dat. When did certain toys debut, before or after Chucky, or never? Are the following words — Summer Joy, Carnation, Joaquin, Chrysanthemum — dis, the names of actual flowers, or dat, the names of children in the Phoenix family?

Jack is a good time, due in large part to its suspenseful air and commentary, which is often hilarious and on-target. When my score would plummet, for example, the host said, "Whoa, that was pathetic." *Jack* doesn't kid-glove, so put on your thick skin and have some fun.

— Carolyn Blackburn

Kawasaki Jet Ski Watercraft

Kawasaki Jet Ski Watercraft is an arcade game.

Right after launch, a disclaimer states that *Jet Ski* isn't a simulation. If you can keep this distinction in mind while racing, you'll have some fun on the waves.

After a few hours, however, *Jet Ski's* repetitive nature becomes clear.

It works best as a twitchy, arcade racing game.

Speeding through the courses provides basic entertainment. Bounding off small ramps adds a little extra interest, although

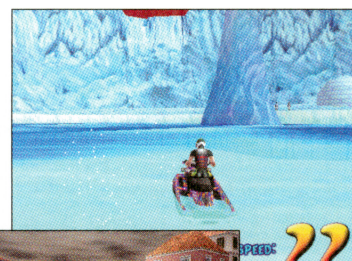
more gratuitous jumps and tricks would have better matched the pace. Driving at full power into a wall only results in a moment of unconscious floating; your racer will pop up again on the craft for more abuse. So check your sense of reality at the door.

The basic races require you to drive through checkpoints on the way to the finish line. Computer racers aren't quite as good as human opponents, but unfortunately, *Jet Ski* provides no networking. A few varieties in race types, like a mad dash for coins, give the game some interest beyond taking a few laps.

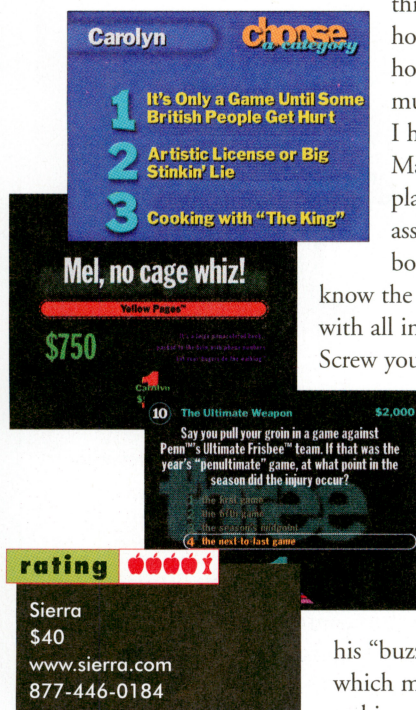
The control of the action balances frustration with precision. You're sure to experience both sensations, as these jet skis whip around turns if you hold down a steering key. Tapping a key yields more intentional results, but threading pylons can still be difficult.

Jet Ski is ultimately an arcade game that attracts interest, but won't hold your attention for long periods of time. It's a good way to play a quick race in between other projects.

— Zack Stern



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Viral Infection

Understanding the Nature of a Computer Virus

A computer virus is a malicious snippet of software that has been created to annoy or destroy. Most often, viruses are simply a nuisance. They might flash a message on your display, slow your computer, or perhaps even add naughty text to your documents.

Other viruses are not so complacent. Some will purposely destroy documents and other data on your hard drive.

It's important to note that computer viruses do not spontaneously appear. Unlike their biological counterparts, computer viruses are created by devilish or disenchanted individuals looking to wreak havoc on millions of computers. It's an effective way for bitter people to seize power and lash back at the world. The more widespread the virus, the more infamous it becomes, and the greater the satisfaction of its author.

There's good news for Macintosh users, however. Virus authors look to infect as many computers as possible in order to have a media-worthy impact.

By Chris McVeigh

This goal means the authors most often target Microsoft Windows-based systems, since they greatly outnumber all other computers, or even PDAs. The Macintosh's small share of the market has left it a relatively safe haven.

Still, your Macintosh is not immune to infection. The most common viral strains now affecting the Macintosh are cross-platform document viruses that strike Microsoft applications. Not long ago, we endured the Word Macro virus, a pesky little beast that infected any Microsoft Word document that utilized macros. More recently we faced Melissa, an email virus that took control of Outlook Express and sent itself to each person in our address book. Thankfully, both viruses were more frustrating than destructive.

Contraction and Remedies

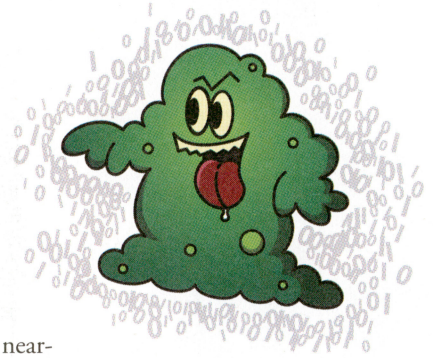
You contract a virus through interaction with others, much as you would in the real world. A virus can hide almost anywhere — in a message a friend sent you via email (do not open suspicious messages or attachments), in a docu-

ment you were given by a coworker, in a shareware application you downloaded, or even on a CD-ROM you bought at a near-by computer store. It's

important not to let paranoia run rampant, however. Software publishers make every effort to scan products for viruses before they press the software onto CD-ROM. Likewise, online software libraries scan every file for potential problems before they post it for download.

You can approach virus control in two ways: a pound of prevention, or an ounce of cure. If you work in an environment where you frequently receive documents from unpredictable sources, it's probably best to be proactive. Antiviral applications such as Norton AntiVirus (www.symantec.com) and Dr. Solomon's Virex (www.mcafee-at-home.com) can scan every file that arrives on your Macintosh for potential problems. Updated virus definitions are posted to the company Websites at regular intervals, allowing the applications to diagnose and repair the very latest viruses.

On the other hand, you may rarely trade files or download shareware. You might opt to remove a virus only after it has been contracted. Several freeware virus removal utilities can be found at Download.com (search for "virus"), and updated utilities are usually available within days of a major virus outbreak. Just be sure to scan your system if you detect any unusual behavior. **MHJ**



Data Encryption

How Information Is Securely Transferred Online

Online shopping has become a convenient alternative to the mall for many of us. There's no crowd, no traffic, no pushy salespeople, and the products arrive at our door the next morning. Still, some people are leery of releasing their credit card numbers into the uncharted waters of the Internet.

This fear is largely unfounded. New encryption technology ensures that data is transferred securely in a format that is totally unrecognizable to prying eyes.

Encryption is the conversion of a message into an unrecognizable form for security purposes. It allows information such as a credit card number to be transmitted in secrecy, understood only by the receiver. In order to make sense of the transmitted data, the receiver must have the right decryption code. The code, known as a key, is the algorithm used to both encrypt and decrypt the message. Let's say I use the key "A=01, B=02, C=03..." to write my first name numerically: Chris becomes "0308180919." To the casual observer, it's

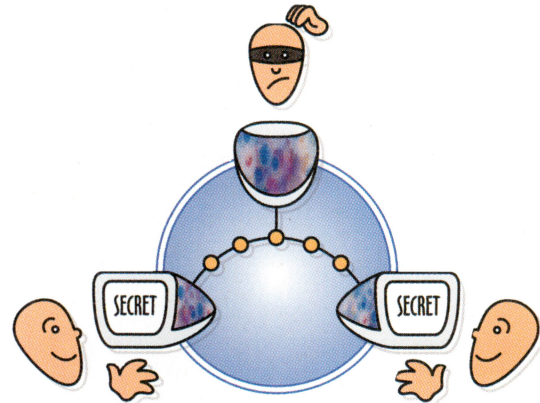
meaningless numbers. To the intended recipient, it's my name.

By Chris McVeigh

Modern cryptography systems make use of two distinct keys to secure the connection between two computers: a public key and a private key. The public key is a set of guidelines — a recipe of sorts — that encrypts messages so they can only be decrypted by the matching private key. The public key is distributed freely by the online retailer's server. The private key encrypts a message so it can be decrypted only by the matching public key. Unlike the public key, the online retailer's private key is always kept secret.

Since public keys are widely distributed, it raises the possibility that a sneaky third party could intercept the public key and try to impersonate another computer. Theoretically, a hacker could redirect an online sales form to his computer and convince your computer that it is still speaking to the retailer's server. However, without the retailer's private key, the hacker could never decrypt the information sent to him.

Certificates were developed to help enhance digital identification. Issued by a reputable authority, a certificate binds a public key to a specific individual or institution. The certificate contains the owner's name, public key, expiration date,



serial number, and digital signature to make it hard for a hacker to nab a public key and impersonate someone else.

Today's browsers use two different encryption formats: 40-bit, or standard encryption; and 128-bit, or "strong" encryption. As the name implies, 40-bit encryption uses a key that is forty bits long, each bit with a value of zero or one, with over a trillion possible permutations. It's possible, however unlikely, for 40-bit keys to be cracked by a computer that relentlessly tries every possible combination until it finds a match. 128-bit encryption, required by many banking Websites, is virtually uncrackable. The 128-digit key has a whopping 3.4×10^{38} possible permutations. The U.S. National Security Agency asserts that an individual using "250 workstations... would take an estimated nine trillion times the age of the universe to decrypt a single message" encrypted with a 128-bit key.

Data encryption is making Web transactions secure and has made the Internet a lot tougher playground for high-tech crooks. The next time you wonder if you should send your credit card information over the Internet or just call a retailer, remember this: it's far easier for criminals to tap your phone than it is to crack an encrypted message. **MHJ**

Discover Help, Decipher PC Files, and Decode Baud Rate

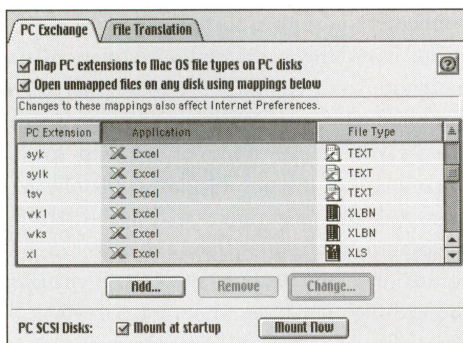
Q I purchased an iMac in 1999 with Mac OS 8.6. I've received Word and Excel files from several people who use PCs, and I cannot open them. Every time I double-click on the document icon it reads, "This is a document that was created by an application program that is not on any disk now available."

— Iris Simpson

A Your Macintosh apparently does not recognize the type of file you have received from your friends. Mac OS 8.6's File Exchange control panel normally does good job identifying foreign documents, but in this

By Chris McVeigh

case, something has slipped through the cracks. Many PC documents have



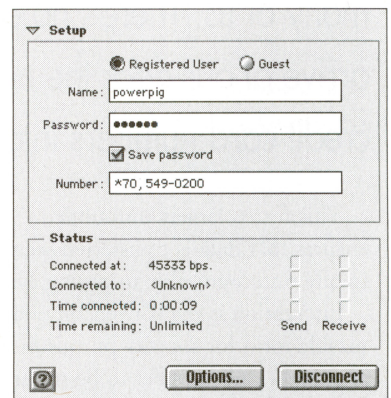
a three-character suffix that helps identify the file type, such as ".jpg." Without this, Mac OS 8.6 may be confused. Try adding ".doc" to the end of Word files and ".xl" to the end of Excel files, and then double-click the document icons. The files should open normally.

In the event the files still will not open, you have two other options. You can simply drag the document icon onto the application icon. This forces the application to launch and open the file. You can also launch the application, select Open from the File menu, locate the file, and attempt to open from within the application. In the rare event that neither of these methods work, you might conclude that the files sent to you have become corrupt. Ask your friends to resend the documents, and try the above methods once again.

Q I recently purchased an iMac DV to replace my Performa. I've noticed an irritating problem when going online after the computer has fallen asleep. Remote Access crashes, and I receive the message "The application Remote Access has unexpectedly quit because an error of Type 2 occurred." If I try to open Remote Access again, I get a "Please Wait..." notice, and nothing happens. What could be causing this?

— R.R. Daum

A Your problem has a rather simple solution. You'll need to update the Mac OS on your iMac DV. The Mac OS 9.1 Update can be found at <http://asu.info.apple.com/swupdates.nsf/art num/n11904>. At 70MB, it's a rather hefty download over a standard modem, however. If you prefer, you can purchase the update on CD for \$19.95. For more information, go to www.apple.com/macOS/.



Q I've attempted to connect an Apple LaserWriter NT to my wife's iMac. Since the printer requires a LocalTalk serial port, I purchased a USB-to-serial converter and have connected it to the system. However, the Chooser won't recognize the printer at all. What can I do?

— Bill Scott

A Although USB-to-serial converters can help you get extra mileage out of old serial devices, most do not function with printers that require AppleTalk, like the LaserWriter NT. On older Macintoshes, AppleTalk functioned through either the serial port or Ethernet port. The LaserWriter NT would have been connected to the computer via the serial port, using the AppleTalk protocol. The iMac, of course, dispensed with the traditional serial port in favor of the more robust USB port. Unfortunately, you cannot simply switch AppleTalk to the USB port. However, the USB-to-serial converter you purchased may have included driver soft-

ware that reroutes AppleTalk to the converter. Open the AppleTalk control panel and check the options available in the "Connect via" pop-up menu. Select the USB-to-serial converter if it is available, close the window, then go to the Chooser, and select the LaserWriter.

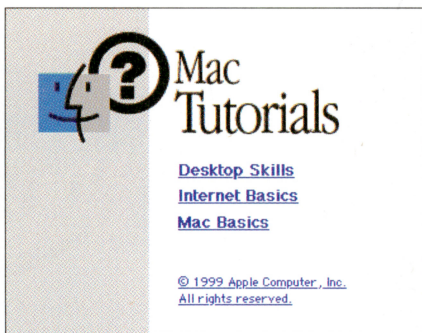
If the USB-to-serial converter does not appear in the pop-up menu, it may well be that your converter does not support AppleTalk, making it useless for your purposes. You could purchase another USB-to-Serial converter that does support AppleTalk. Or, purchase a serial/Ethernet adapter for the printer and connect it to the iMac's Ethernet port. The AsantéTalk LocalTalk to Ethernet Bridge is available from Asanté for \$95 (www.asante.com). Finally, one of the best options is to simply buy a new printer. You can purchase a brand new Epson Stylus Color 777 inkjet printer, which has a much higher resolution than the NT, for just \$100.

Q Do you know where I can find instructional books that can teach me how to use my iMac? I've had it for over a year, and none of my friends have been able to help me since they all use PCs! I'd appreciate any help you can offer.

— Mary Ann Ronga

A Although I can't recommend a specific book, I suggest you start learning with the Mac OS's Help Center. Start your iMac, and wait until you can see a series of icons sitting on the right at the desktop. At the top, you'll see a series of menus: File, Edit, View,

Special, and Help. Click on the word Help to pull down the menu. The third item listed is "Mac Tutorials." Move the mouse down to those words, and when the text is highlighted, click once with the mouse. The Help Viewer will open, giving you access to three different tutorials: Desktop Skills, Internet Basics, and Mac Basics. This



should give you the jump-start that you've been seeking!

Q I have a PowerBook G3 with a 56K modem. I can connect at 48,000 bps, but I can't get a download speed faster than 5.6K/second. Is there any way I can get a faster download speed? Shouldn't I be getting 56K/second? Thanks in advance.

— Stephen Faucette

A You're experiencing a common confusion, Stephen. There are actually three different measurements of a modem's connection speed. The connection speed shown in the Remote Access control panel is bits per second (bps), and it tends to be a rather high number. The connection speed you see in your browser is shown in Kilobytes per second (K). Finally, the connection speed advertised in the PowerBook's specifications is noted in bits as a multiple of 1,000 (using the empirical denotation "K," not referencing Kilobyte, or even kilobit). Now, eight bits are in a byte, and 1,024 bytes are in a Kilobyte. So, 5.6 Kilobytes /second is actually $5.6 \times 1,024 \times 8 = 45,875$ bps. That's close to your connection rate of 48,000 bps.

Your modem can theoretically connect at a maximum rate of 56K, or 56,000 bps. Communications regulations in the

MacHome Quiz

Whether you've forgotten more about the Mac than most people know or you're new to the computer, it's fun to test your memory. Here are some questions that will leave you with a few more tricks up your sleeve. And if you have quiz questions for us, stump us at letters@machome.com!

1. What happens when you hold down the Option key and click on the "About the Finder..." in the Apple Menu of the desktop in Mac OS 9?
2. Eliminate drifts of stickies, papers, and reminders — how can you use Word 2001 to get organized by creating a bulleted list?
3. Which keyboard commands can you use to cycle through all open applications?
4. How can you adjust the click tension (sensitivity) of an optical Apple Pro Mouse?
5. How can you change the style and size of the menu bar clock?
6. There's more to iTunes than meets the eye. How can you swap visualization patterns?
7. How do you activate the Application Switcher?
8. How can you zap an item from the Trash back to its original location?
9. What are the symptoms of a dead motherboard battery?

Answers on page 56

have questions?

Got a Mac problem that's driving you nuts? Let us take a crack at it. We'll answer questions of general interest to all readers. All mail is assumed intended for publication, and we reserve the right to edit questions for brevity and clarity. When sending your questions, include your full name and phone number. Send your questions to:

questions@machome.com

United States limit the download rate to 53,000 bps, and imperfect telephone conditions can further erode your top connection speed. A 48,000 bps connection is actually a good rate for a modem; most people I know never hit 53,000 bps. The 7,000 bps you're missing only amounts to 0.8 Kilobytes /second, a small amount in the grander scheme of things. To really boost your download rate, consider a cable modem or DSL. **MHJ**

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Coast to Coast Memory	800-4-MEMORY	800-4-MEMORY	18004memory.com	66
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Ez Quest	714-694 0031	N/A	ezq.com	65
Farallon	510-346-8001	510-346-8001	farallon.com	65
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Hewlett-Packard	N/A	N/A	hp.com/gp/mac-connect	62
Kusuma	866-JAM-BAGS	866-JAM-BAGS	jambags.com	66
Leister Productions	717-697-1378	717-697-1378	leisterpro.com	56
Lind Electronics	800-697-3702	800-697-3702	lindelectronics.com	64
MacAcademy	800-527-1914	N/A	macacademy.com	63
MacAlley	800-644-1132	800-644-1132	macally.com	70
MacMall	800-579-0698	800-579-0698	macmall.com	58-59
Macmart	800-600-2708	N/A	macmart.com	66
MacShowLive	N/A	N/A	macshowlive.com	25
Micromat	800-829-6227	707-837-8012	micromat.com	1BC
Microsoft	N/A	N/A	microsoft.com/mac	18-19
Netopia	800.485.5741	510-814-5000	timbuktu.pro	62
Otherworld Computing	800-275-4576	N/A	macsales.com	60-61
PhotoSpecialists	888.836.2899	N/A	thephotospecialists.com	57
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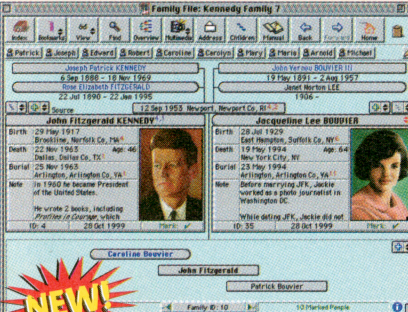
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MacHome Quiz Answers!!

from pg. 55

1. An image of the Apple campus appears with the names of the Finder designers and support staff.
2. On the Format menu of a blank Word 2001 document, select Bullets and Numbering. Choose between Numbered, for a 1-2-3 list, or Picture, to use icons instead of bullets.
3. Hold down the Command key, and press Tab. The operating system will bring each active application to the front in turn.
4. Turn the mouse over and look at its belly — there's a dial that you can twist to three different settings. Most sensitive is to the left; least sensitive is to the right. If the mouse still doesn't feel right, open the Mouse control panel, where you can set tracking speed and double-click rate.
5. Open the Date & Time control panel, then select Clock Options. You can then change the font size and style.
6. Press Q, W, A, or S while displaying a visualization and watch it morph into different shapes and colors. An ID tag appears in the upper right corner of the iTunes screen that names the current hypnotic pattern. Push D to restore the image to its default settings. Explore other keys and let us know what you find!
7. On the upper right corner of your screen is an icon for the front active application. Click the icon, then without releasing the mouse button, drag the cursor past the bottom of the menu, and let go. You now have a convenient, mobile list of active applications; just press the button for the one you want to be the top application.
8. Double-click the Trash can. Select the item you want to move back, and push Command + Y.
9. The Mac loses preferences (and returns some settings to their defaults), forgets the date and time, and might not even power up. If your Mac won't boot and previously exhibited these other behaviors, replace the battery, or take it to a repair shop for help. A battery should last a few years, so don't worry about this if you have a new Mac.

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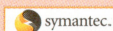
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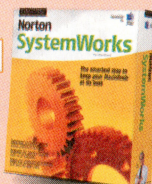
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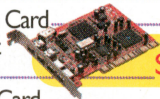
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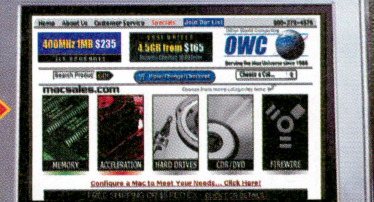
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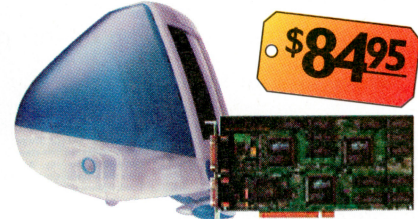
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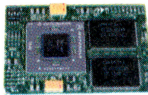
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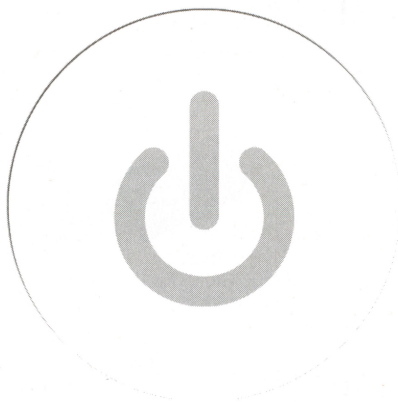
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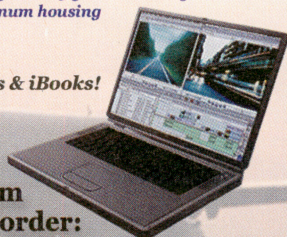
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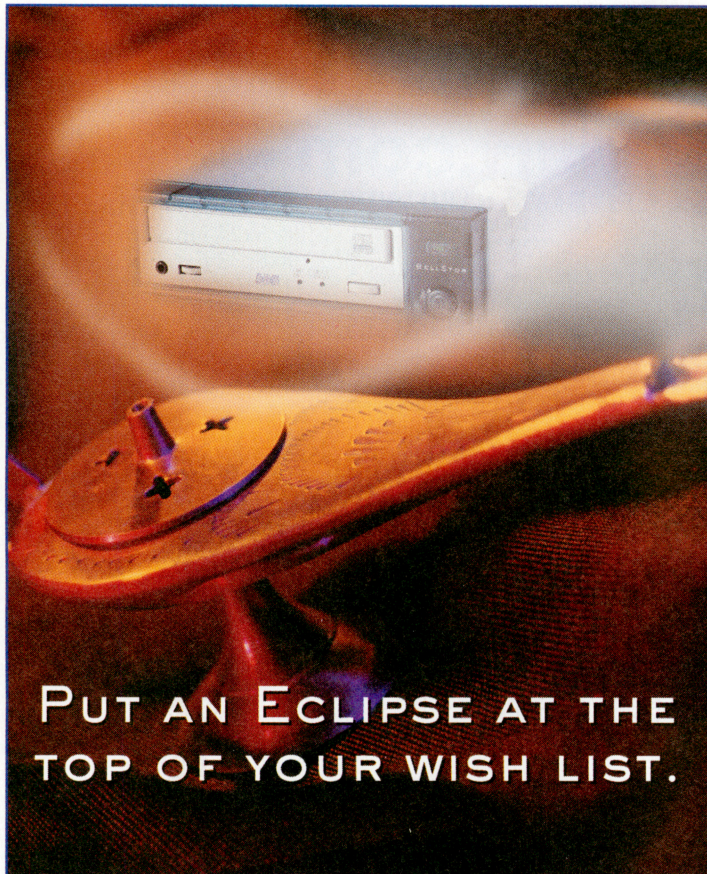


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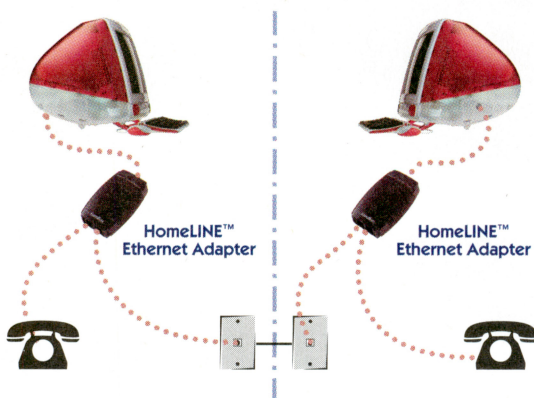
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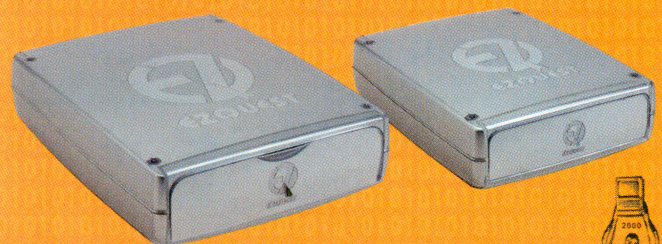
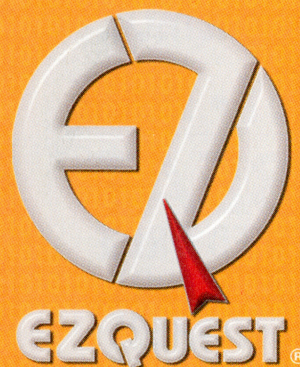
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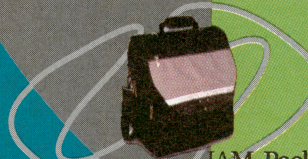
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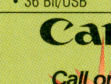
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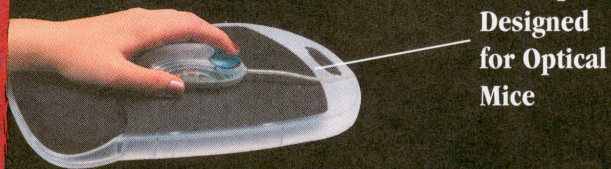
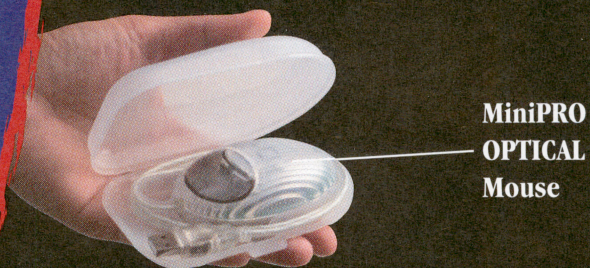
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- * New affordable 4000 DPI film scanner. * Uses Xenon lamp light source * USB and SCSI interfaces. * Creates 42 bit scans for 35mm and APS film. * "Canon FARE" automatic dust and scratch removal. * Fast 48 second scan time and 3.4 dynamic range. * Includes Adobe Photoshop LE

Canoscan 2710.....Call

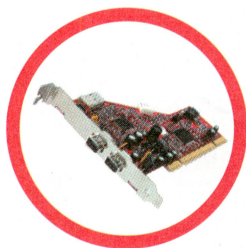


Macally USB Multimedia Keyboard

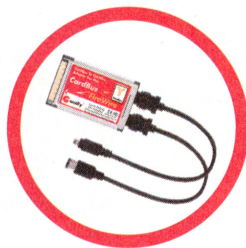


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Understand File Navigation, Share Documents, and Manage Window Behavior

Mac OS X has been released. Are you among the first to get a copy? Early adopters and cautious observers can use these tips to uncover the new Mac OS. With these notes, you'll be on your way to total Mac OS X enlightenment.

Stoptlights

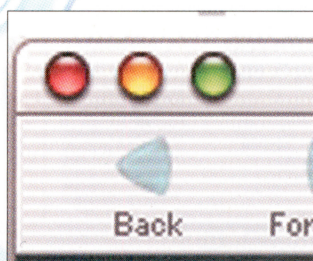
Instead of Mac OS 9's close box and other title bar options, Mac OS X features three balls of color. Like a

traffic light, red

closes a window. Green

expands a window to best fit the information to the screen, and yellow sends a window to the Dock.

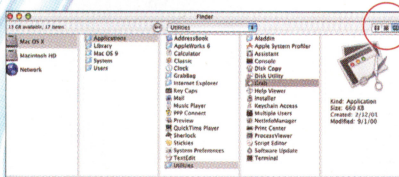
By Zack Stern



Navigating Without a Compass

Basic navigation has been modified in Mac OS X, but it's still easy to pick up. In the upper-right corner of the Finder window, choose one of three ways of maneuvering through files. The leftmost option with folder icons works almost like Mac OS 9. Double-clicking a folder takes you to a new window,

but by default, that window is in the same space as the previous one. The middle button with horizontal lines is for a list view. Click this



space, and navigate files with cascading folders as in Mac OS 9. The right option with the panes icon expands your documents and folders horizontally with multiple frames. The leftmost frame displays the hard drive. Click it once for its contents to be presented in the adjacent, right frame. Continue this process until you find what you're looking for. Once a file is located, clicking it once lets you preview a QuickTime video, QTVR, image, or other file from the Finder.

The Dock

The Dock is Mac OS X's new way to quickly access files. Place anything into the Dock at the bottom of the screen by dragging and dropping. You can store applications, URLs, documents,

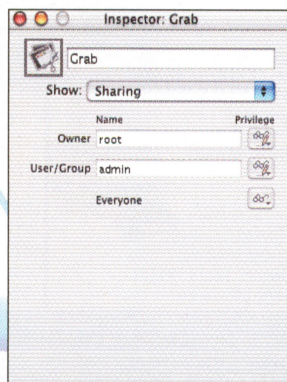
and other files within easy reach. Just click once on an item in the Dock to activate it.



The Dock & Desktop Preferences lets you alter the behavior of the adaptable Dock. In this window, change the size of the Dock, force it to hide unless you move the mouse to the bottom of the screen, and tell it to animate the launch of applications, among other options.

Passwords and Users

Mac OS X caters to individual user's settings, and to keep track of everyone's preferences, it requires each user to log in. Each person has their own document and application folders that can be shared or restricted between users. To share an item, click it once, and then push Command + I. From that screen, grab the pop-up menu on the right side that corre-



sponds with a user. To edit the sharing options, select the glasses, pencil, or both for read, write and read/write access respectively. **MHJ**

If this is Norton™...



This is TechTool Pro...



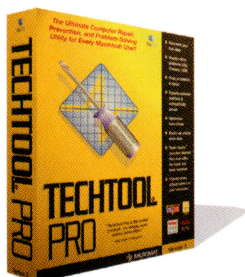
Nothing can ruin your day faster than a broken computer. And while Macintosh is one of the most reliable computers in the world, sometimes things can go wrong. That's why we invented TechTool Pro. TechTool Pro is the super-utility that can find and isolate almost any problem on your computer. No other utility in the world comes even close to covering as many aspects of your Macintosh as TechTool Pro.

But diagnosing computer problems is only half the battle. Besides repairing drives, recovering data and checking the health of your Macintosh components, TechTool Pro can now help protect you against virus problems and software conflicts. TechTool Pro can also keep your Mac running at its peak between problems. The program optimizes your disk drive to make your computer run faster and more efficiently. Our RAM panel even allows you to see

the inner configuration of your memory without opening your computer case.

Do all these features make TechTool Pro complicated to use? Not at all. The Multitester feature allows you to give your computer a full checkup with one click of your mouse. TechTool Pro even creates graphic, easy-to-read and understand reports. Now you can know the state of your computer without having a degree in computer science.

Every day, more and more Macintosh professionals are choosing TechTool over other system utilities. In fact, even Apple Computer includes TechTool Deluxe with every copy of their AppleCare™ Protection Plan. Simply put, TechTool Pro 3 is the most complete and powerful troubleshooting utility available for your computer. Why would you settle for anything less?

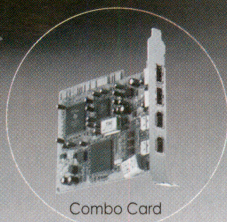


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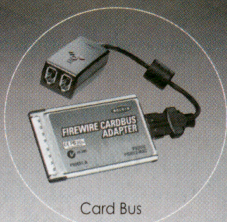
FireWire 6-Port Hub

From BELKIN

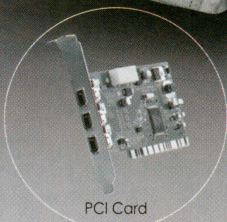
Intrinsic cable management meets compact symmetry and graceful lines. An arc of rear ports flows cables to the computer—function meets form. For all its awesome capabilities, such as a docking ring and 400Mbps transfer speed, you'll love what this hub does for your workspace. At Belkin, we're innovating to make the hottest interface the coolest.



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The 6-Port Hub and other FireWire products are available at belkin.com. When you purchase the 6-Port Hub, please enter coupon code 13945263 for a free gift (while supplies last).

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